



DESPATCHES

the magazine of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides



“To analyse, develop and raise the understanding, practice and profession of battlefield guiding; and to promote the education of battlefield guides and visitors.”

FIELDguides

Cover image: Guides Bob Shaw and Tim Lynch outside Plotzenzee Prison in Berlin having completed a Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Guide training course for Guild partners Anglia Tours.





56 - 581. 1st Life Guards. Left to right: Major Sir E. Schrieber; (See 38 - 387). Colonel Sir George Holford (See 10-106); Colonel Miles, Quarter Master General; Major Lord Penrhyn (See also 52 - 525); Major Sir John Cotterell. 1915-1916. Knightsbridge Barracks.

A recent find in a dust covered file in the basement of history found evidence that the guiding legend that is John Cotterill was actually present to tell troops in WW1 that they aren't there "to enjoy themselves."

FIRSTcontact:

Guild Chair Mike Scott	Guild Secretary Tim Stoneman	Guild Membership Secretary - Tony Smith
chair@gbg- international.com	secretary@gbg- international.com	mbr.sec@gbg- international.com

 www.facebook.com/battleguide
 twitter.com/GuildofBG
 www.instagram.com/guild_bg

Material for publication in the Autumn edition should reach the Editor no later than end of August 2024. This is a deadline and submissions should be sent as far in advance as possible.

All material should be sent via Guild Secretary Tim Stoneman at: secretary@gbg-international.com

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EDITOR'Sguidelines:

Welcome to the spring edition of 'Dispatches'. A big thank you, to all those that have contributed for this edition, please keep the material and incriminating photo's coming.

In the next issue of 'Dispatches', we will announce the winner of the competition for the best article submitted to this edition of 'Dispatches', who will receive dinner for two at the Union Jack Club. It was great to see everyone attending the AGM, there was a fantastic opportunity to see the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, a WW1 (Daphne) tank in the Lincolnshire Regiment Museum both accompanied by fascinating talks by local volunteers and a chance to be guided on the Battle of Lincoln by Anthony Rich. At the AGM dinner there was the usual prize giving. A big well done and congratulations must go to John Cotterill for being awarded the Old Bill Award for his incredible sense of humour. Sue King, (who led the Management Board Review Team) was awarded the Richard Holmes award for her hard work. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission was awarded the Nathaniel Wade Award for their contribution to the wider military history community and Andy Johnson was awarded the Will Townsend Award for his sharing of military history knowledge. As the weather gets warmer and we see an increase in guiding, it means more opportunities to send in photos of yourselves guiding! Alison Biegel of Anglia Tours (who are part of Next Generation Travel) was interviewed on Guild related

matters and pointed out a bit of guiding industry reality. The company hires Guides with a wide range of different backgrounds but being either a member or an accredited member of the Guild is not a requirement as they train and quality assure their guides internally. Now, more than ever, there is a requirement for good guides with both the ability to 'inform, educate and entertain' whilst also possessing those tour management skills such as involving customers in decision making or correct technique when using a microphone on a coach. This will be something the new Guild Education Director will be looking into to see if communication and guiding best practice is something the members would like to do as part of their professional development. She also suggested that it's time to revisit and look at how we develop Battlefield Guides as times have changed. Alison pointed out that since Covid, "the industry has changed, the conditions have changed, customer expectations have changed, but the guides haven't"! As Editor, I wanted to get the Members' 'feel' for a space in 'Dispatches' where one can write in letters to add an opinion on an article or add some detail to it. If this is a feature you would like to see, please contact me on rtnshaw@hotmail.com, and let me know.



Robert Shaw
Editor

OPENINGshot:

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



Dear fellow members and Guild Partners, welcome to this issue of 'Despatches'.

First, I would like to say what a success the AGM and Conference in Lincoln were. In my opinion, the feeling of comradeship was tangible. It could be felt from the moment we met at the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, through the evening quiz on Friday, on to the final wash up at the end of the conference on Sunday. Saturday saw the usual attempts at assignments 1, 4 and 5, some successful. And then the long AGM. It had to be so for many important reasons, none more so that for members to feel this was their meeting and a chance to have their say, which they did. In itself, with what came out of it, including the members voting against a couple of proposals from the Board, the AGM for me was a highlight of the weekend, though I know some members would not say the same. I suppose it depends on from what angle you view it.

We enjoyed an excellent and convivial dinner on Saturday evening with the awards presentation. The recipients of awards at the conference were – Will Townsend Award to Andy Johnson; Old Bill Award to John Cotterill; the Richard Holmes Award to Sue King and the Nataniel Wade Award to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It is a shame that one of the most important organisers of the weekend, Chris Finn, missed the jamboree having caught Covid-19. Thanks to everyone who made the weekend such a positive event.

I took away many ideas, some of which we will be able to develop to provide new opportunities and benefits for members.

Second, I have just returned from joining the Ypres recce for a few days. Sadly, I could not be there for the full event. But the brief experience I had was, as Paul Oldfield said of one presentation, educational. Almost everything I saw and heard was just that – educational. It was almost all new knowledge. Shared freely by members from their research for the recce or from their personal libraries of information stored in their heads. It was an outstanding opportunity.

It was good to see a group of members, some accredited, share information on the ground. In

particular, this recce focussed on paths less well travelled. The Indian Army at Ypres, the area behind the lines of Third Ypres, and sadly part of the recce I could not join, the 1918 battles in the Ypres salient. It was a privilege to join the group for a couple of days and to see the depth of expertise that resides in the membership. My thanks to John Cotterill for leading the recce and every member who contributed to the success of the event.

Events, some social such as the golf and the Christmas lunch, others as learning opportunities or for accreditation, are at the core of the Guild. They are an opportunity, as I have seen in Ypres, for members to learn from each other and address the stated aims of the Guild. As it says on our website *'Our aim is to analyse, develop and raise the understanding, practice and profession of battlefield guiding, and to promote the education of battlefield guides and visitors.'* It is through events that members have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their skills and knowledge. It has been said that we focus too much on events in our provision for members, but it is only by this means that we give members the opportunities that we say we should in our Guild's aims.

There are, as we put the events of the past behind us, opportunities for development, improvement, change and advance. Events and accreditation will always be some of the most important things we do.

Good luck with your tours over the next few months. I look forward to seeing many of you in the field.

Mike Scott
Chairman

BOXING DAY BATTLE - NORTH CAPE 1943

Tim Stoneman

No, not the annual family disputes about leftover Christmas cake, the remains of the turkey and the like! This was a battle in the trackless Arctic seas, in the darkness of a Polar night, resulting in the deaths of nearly 2000 sailors, mostly drowned in the freezing Barents Sea, and the loss of the Scharnhorst, the German Kriegsmarine's last operational battleship.¹

North Cape



So where is North Cape? It is said to be the northernmost point of mainland Europe², and if one tried to describe the action from there, it would need a lot of imagination to relate to the events of 1943. If you try to do so on the battle's anniversary, you may not even get there – in winter, even the snowploughs sometimes can't reach the Cape!

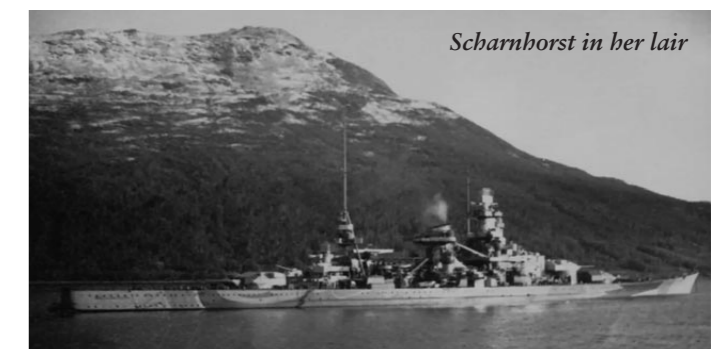
Why does this article appear in a publication for battlefield guides? After all, even the name of the battle is a bit of a misnomer; North Cape is 100 miles south of the location of the final part of the action (and earlier phases took place even further from land) and who can guide 'where it happened' – and smell any cordite? Well, I will address the issue of guiding a naval battle later, but for now, let's set the scene.

The Background

During the Second World War, the western allies ran a series of convoys to supply the Soviet Union with war materials; in winter, constrained by the Arctic ice, they sailed further south than in summer, and thus nearer to German-occupied Norway, to reach their destination of Murmansk, the only ice-free port in Northern Russia. The German forces, anxious to prevent these supplies reaching Stalin's forces, interdicted these convoys by all means available, despite the appalling conditions – howling gales, mountainous seas, heavy icing affecting ships and aircraft alike, perpetual darkness in winter or

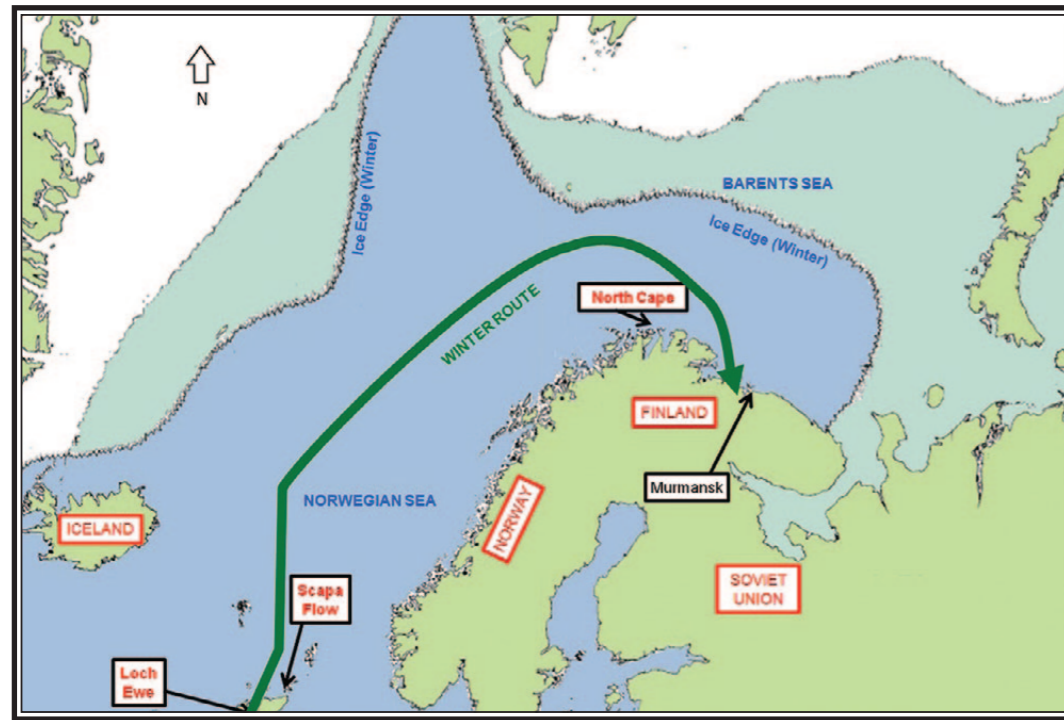
perpetual daylight in summer. These natural enemies, of course, affected friend and foe alike!

Into this maelstrom the allies sent Convoy JW55B, comprising some 19 merchant ships, which left Loch Ewe, its Scottish assembly point, on 20 December. JW55B had a close escort of destroyers, intended to protect it against attack by submarine or aircraft. Also destined to play a smaller part in the battle was Convoy RA 55A, the returning empty ships from an earlier run to Murmansk, and its close escort. Additionally, two other groups of ships were available to cover the convoys against the potential threat of attack by heavy German surface units. These were a force of three cruisers ('Force 1³') commanded by Vice Admiral 'Bob' Burnett, which had covered the previous convoy to Murmansk, and 'Force 2⁴', a battleship, a cruiser and escorting destroyers, based in Scapa Flow and commanded by the Commander in Chief, Home Fleet, Admiral Bruce Fraser.



Scharnhorst in her lair

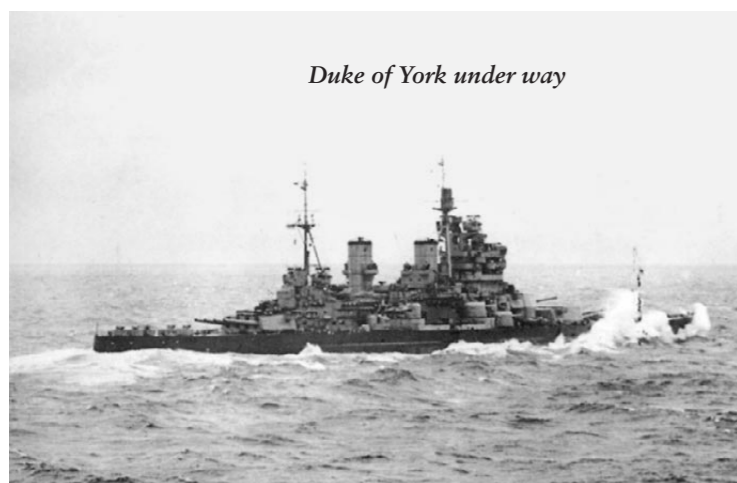
¹ Whilst the Royal Navy referred to her as a battlecruiser, her German designation was Schlachtschiff – literally 'battleship'. ² Technically it is not so – Nordkapp (its Norse name) is on the island of Magerøya, and not only that, the adjacent headland of Knivskjelodden is some 1500 yards nearer the Pole! ³ HM Ships *Belfast*, *Norfolk* and *Sheffield*. ⁴ HM Ships *Duke of York*, *Jamaica*, *Saumarez*, *Savage*, *Scorpion* and the Norwegian *Stord*.



Map 1: Russian Convoy Winter Route

Prelude to Battle

German reconnaissance aircraft detected JW55B on 22 December, and Konteradmiral Erich Bey was ordered to commence Operation Ostfront, the interception of JW55B. He commanded a task force of *Scharnhorst* and five heavy destroyers. The battleship, his flagship, had been a thorn in the side of the British for many years – she, with her sister ship, had overwhelmed the armed merchant cruiser HMS *Rawalpindi* in 1939, had sent the aircraft carrier HMS *Glorious* and her escorts to the bottom of the Norwegian Sea in 1940, had sunk or captured 22 merchant ships in a convoy-raiding sortie in 1941 and had cocked a snook at the Royal Navy and RAF in 1942 by sailing, in daylight, through the Strait of Dover. Bey's ships sortied from Altafjord on Christmas Day, in deteriorating weather as a south-westerly gale sprang up.



First Contact

Aware of his opponent's departure, Fraser sailed Force 2 from its base, and ordered Force 1 to set sail to protect the convoys. Making their way through the darkness, Burnett's cruisers positioned themselves on the enemy's likeliest approach route - a move rewarded at 0900 when *Belfast's* search radar detected a contact, subsequently confirmed as *Scharnhorst*. Shortly afterwards the cruisers opened fire at a range of 13,000 yards. The

enemy replied and, in an exchange of fire, she scored no hits, but British shells knocked out her forward radar set, forcing her to use visual means of controlling fire – in the darkness her gunners could not see two of the ships, and could only detect *Norfolk* when the latter's guns fired (she was the only one of the three without flashless cordite). Bey, who by this point had detached his destroyers to search further to the south, thought he was up against a battleship and reversed course to the south, hoping to use his superior speed to escape, circle around his opponent and resume the hunt for the convoy.

Burnett turned back to cover JW55B, a decision for which he was criticised by some (but, notably, not by Fraser, who subsequently agreed with this choice), and was again well-placed when Bey approached the convoy again at about midday. Once again, fire was exchanged, and this time *Scharnhorst's* shells hit *Norfolk* hard, killing seven of her ship's company, and knocking out a main armament turret and her main radars. The cruisers fended him off from the convoy again, and Bey, thwarted, decided to return to port. He made off southwards at best speed, pursued by Burnett's cruisers - although two of them started to suffer from engine problems, leaving *Belfast* to chase single-handed and outgunned.

Unknown to Bey, however, Force 2 was approaching from the southwest. Could it intercept *Scharnhorst* before she outpaced *Belfast* and was lost in the darkness? *Belfast* continued to report the enemy's position and sent her destroyers ahead to position for a torpedo attack. At 1615 *Jamaica's* radar detected *Scharnhorst*; two minutes later *Duke of York's* search radar

detected her at 45,500 yards, and at 1648 *Belfast* fired starshell to illuminate the enemy battleship. Unaware of *Duke of York's* arrival on the scene, *Scharnhorst* was hit by 14" salvoes from *Duke of York*, firing at a range of 11,500 yards. A first-salvo hit knocked out *Scharnhorst's* two forward turrets, and shells continued to fall around her. Bey turned north but was engaged by *Belfast* and *Norfolk* (who had caught up with Burnett's flagship).

Running for Home

Now turning east at 31 knots, Bey hoped to outdistance his opponents, and was gradually opening the range when a further 14" hit knocked out one of *Scharnhorst's* boiler rooms. This drastically reduced her speed; she was reduced to 10 knots, until frantic efforts by her engine room staff quickly restored more power. Although she was soon making some 22 knots, this was not enough. Destroyers could now catch up, and overtake, to get into position for a classic series of torpedo attacks, their weapon crews manning open gun and torpedo mountings on icy slippery decks. Fraser's destroyers now took up the battle, scoring several hits, reducing *Scharnhorst's*

speed to 10 knots again. The wounded giant could still bite, however; the destroyer *Saumarez* took a couple of hits from the battleship's secondary armament, killing 11 of her ship's company.

By now in a sorry state, the German battleship, illuminated by multiple starshells, came under fire from *Duke of York* and the cruisers, and was subjected to more torpedo attacks from two of the cruisers and eight destroyers. Unable to escape, she capsized and sank at 1945, leaving 36 survivors from her complement of 1968 to be rescued by British destroyers; neither Bey nor any of the ship's officers was amongst them.

The Aftermath

Fraser famously made a signal to the Admiralty: "*Scharnhorst sunk*", the reply was: "*Grand, well done*". A classic understatement! However, in a post-action briefing to the officers in *Duke of York*, he said, "*Gentlemen, the battle against Scharnhorst has ended in victory for us. I hope that if any of you are ever called upon to lead a ship into action against an opponent many times superior, you will command your ship as gallantly as Scharnhorst was commanded today.*"

WHAT'S IN A NAME? Battle Nomenclature

Traditionally, actions on land are named after some local place or geographical feature (think Waterloo, Cannae, Al Khafji and thousands more). That's a bit more challenging at sea, when the nearest solid land is often the ocean floor or seabed below the combatants (but that's sometimes used – the Battle of Dogger Bank). Close to land, things get easier (the Battle of the Denmark Strait, Leyte Gulf etc). Alternatively, pick the nearest prominent geographical feature ashore – even though it may have nothing to do with the engagement concerned (the Battle of Trafalgar, the Battle of the Nile), or use

the name of the seaspace itself (the Battle of the Coral Sea), or even the date on which the fighting took place (The Glorious First of June). Some battles are given different names by the two sides (the Battle of Jutland takes its (British) name from a peninsula in Denmark, whereas the Germans call this combat Der Skaggerakschlacht – the Skaggerak is the strait between Denmark and Norway). The sinking of *Scharnhorst* took place way out in the Barents Sea – but the name 'Barents Sea' had already been taken for a battle the previous year, so this action is known to history as the Battle of the North Cape.

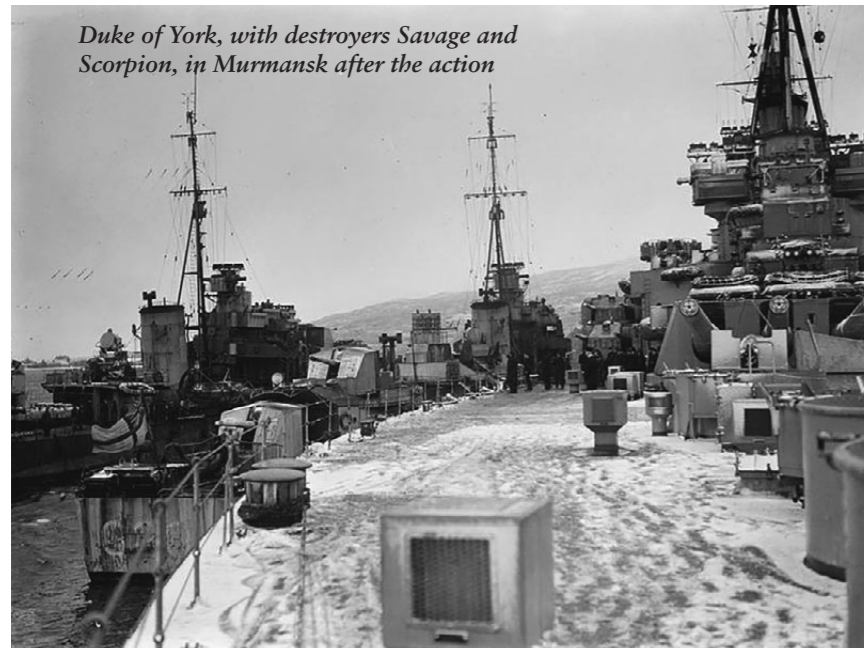
Guiding a Naval Battle?

Those with long memories may recall that I discussed this subject in an article way back in the past⁵; to summarise, guiding a sea battle in its geographical location, unless you can swim very well, is challenging, but, if one visits the places where 'jolly jack' was fighting, it's not difficult to give a similar impression to that given when standing in a trench, or on Sword Beach, and describing what Tommy Atkins did/felt/saw!

In this case, one of the protagonists (*HMS Belfast*) can be found opposite the Tower of London, and a visit to, say, her shell room, where gunners would

have been busy loading the ammunition hoists with 6" projectiles (by hand) in a heaving, rolling ship, well below the waterline, or to her machinery spaces where the stokers, with little but thin steel plating between them and the Arctic seas, would be contemplating the possible impact of an 11" shell from the *Scharnhorst*. A little further afield, *HMS Cavalier*, displayed in the Chatham Historic Dockyard, gives one a bit of an understanding of what those in *Saumarez* or her sisters would have gone through in a ship with open bridge and non-enclosed gun mountings. Neither *Cavalier* (which fought on the Russian convoys, but not at the Battle

⁵ Tim Stoneman, A Life Tour on the Ocean Wave?, 'Despatches', Summer 2018



Duke of York, with destroyers Savage and Scorpion, in Murmansk after the action

of North Cape) nor *Belfast* are in their Second World War configuration (both were modernised in Cold War days), but both serve very well as a venue for explaining what happened in those far-distant waters.

Alternatively, one could stand on the point of land concerned and describe the action from there – the view is impressive, and there's a large-scale model of *Scharnhorst* in the visitor centre (see photos) and I have taken a group to the North Cape and done exactly that.

I'll close by echoing the last part of what I wrote in 2018: in summary, it's perfectly feasible to tour a nautical 'battlefield' without getting your feet wet – although it does help if you can 'smell the cordite/salt spray'!



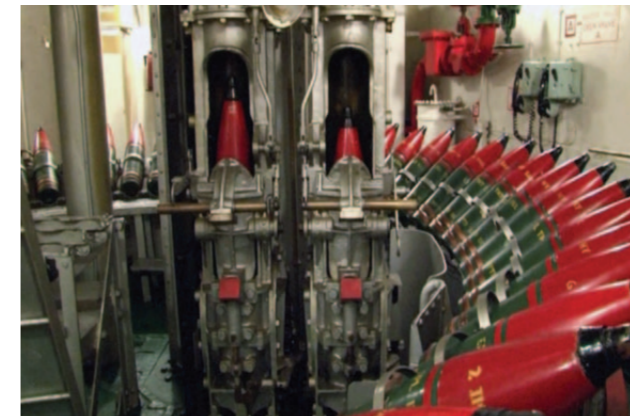
HMS Cavalier



HMS Belfast



Large-scale model of Scharnhorst



Battle Stations: open bridge (Cavalier), open gun mounting (Explosion! Museum, Gosport), shell room (Belfast), View from bridge over forward guns (Cavalier)

EVENTguide 2024

- 5-7 Apr Paras in Normandy - Interested members Please contact Bob Shaw: rtshaw@hotmail.com
- 23 May 'The Battlefield that never was.' A summer stroll around the WW2 defences at Hartford End, Essex - For details, please contact Tony Scott: tscottbattlehonours@gmail.com
- 14 Aug Guild Golf Championships - For details please contact James Davis: james@jamesdavisphysio.co.uk
- 16 Aug Badged Guides Dinner - Further details to follow. Interested Accredited Members please contact Graeme Cooper: graeme@corporatebattlefields.com
- 9 Oct Guild Visit: Larkhill Royal Artillery Garrison, Wiltshire - For details please contact Roger Grafton: roger.grafton@gmail.com
- 31 Oct - 4 Nov Guild Recce: Operation Market Garden, Netherlands - For details please contact Joris Nieuwint: joris@thebattlefieldexplorer.com
- 6 Dec Guild Christmas Lunch - For details please contact Bob Shaw: rtshaw@hotmail.com

Whilst there is a full programme of events planned for the next year, we are still encouraging members to organise localised events. Help in planning any event is available from David Harvey events@gbg-international.com

HONOURING OUR FALLEN: BRITISH SERVICEMEN IN THE KOREAN WAR

Martin Uden

One of my predecessors as Head of Mission in Seoul was as surprised as anybody when Kim Il-sung launched an invasion of South Korea on 25 June 1950. While we have to recall that he did not have the modern advantages of instant news and communications, I do not think I would have made the decision to sit tight and wait to be taken prisoner by the North Koreans. But he did, with the result of being forced (with his No 2, George Blake, who went on to notoriety in other fields) to march north and be detained in North Korea until he was flown back to London in April 1953.

The rest of the world was equally unprepared for the invasion, but the United States were able to take advantage of a Soviet boycott of the UN Security Council to pass a resolution on 27 June authorising military assistance to South Korea to repel the invaders. The United States sent a small force in early July from the occupation forces in Japan, while the UK sent troops from Hong Kong arriving in late August.

The advantage of surprise was considerable, and the North rapidly swept down the peninsula, forcing the defenders into a small area in South East Korea bounded by what was known as the Pusan Perimeter. The US was able to augment its numbers considerably and on 15 September General MacArthur implemented one of history's most audacious and successful amphibious landings halfway up the peninsula at Incheon. This turned the tide of the war and now it was South Korea and its allies who swept northwards, retaking Seoul and reaching the Yalu River, the border with China. To give an idea of scale, it is almost 700km from Busan to the Yalu.

At this point, China entered the fray on 10 October, tipping the balance once again. Now it was the turn of the Chinese and North Koreans to move south retaking Seoul, although eventually repulsed, and the line of battle settled roughly where the Demilitarised Zone is today, not so far from the 38th Parallel where it all began. The war continued for two and a half bloody years before the Armistice was signed on 27 July 1953.



United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea (UNMCK) British Memorial and plot - photo: UNMCK

This account deals primarily with the British fatalities of the War, so there are many important facets that I cannot touch on, and I must apologise when so many crucial stories must go unrelated here.

Britain's part was undoubtedly significant. The army formed part of the Commonwealth Division, bringing in Australian, Canadian and New Zealand forces, as well as South African air support and Indian field hospitals. For the UK, 1,078 of our servicemen died with thousands more injured, missing or taken prisoner.

While in both the UK and USA, this is often called the "Forgotten War", it is of course nothing of the sort in Korea, and our contribution is deeply valued and remembered even now. I was lucky enough to be working in the British Embassy in Seoul when the first formal revisit took place in 1981 and I have been privileged to assist during the annual revisits on subsequent postings. These visits (handsomely

subsidised by the Korean Government) instilled in me an enormous respect for the veterans – most of whom were National Servicemen – and an appreciation of what a difference firstly the War and then the revisit had made to their lives. To see the vibrant, prosperous country that their comrades had died for, and to be treated as heroes wherever they went, meant a great deal to them all.

One of the fixed points in all those visits, and normally the most poignant, was the visit to Busan to the United Nations Memorial Cemetery Korea, where 885 British graves hold men who died in service of their country. Consequently, when I saw, during the Covid lockdown, a post on Facebook from Stephanie Hwang, the Assistant Director of Public Relations at the Cemetery, I was happy to respond. She said, "Every day I walk the grounds of our Cemetery. I pass by the graves and ask our interred, 'Why did you serve during the Korean War? What was it like?' The answer is always silent. And in Korea, there is a saying 'There is no grave without a story'. But what is that story?!"

Her vision was to assist the cemetery docents as they guide people around the graves so that they could say something of the men resting there, beyond the scant details of rank, initials, name, affiliation, age, and date of death that are on the headstone. I saw an opportunity to honour these fallen heroes, not least because family history has been a lifetime's hobby for me, so I knew what might be feasible in terms of gathering photos and writing short biographies for as many as I could.

I must acknowledge that the Cemetery and two stalwart British veterans have been trying over the years to collect pictures of the men buried there, with considerable success. So, I am happy to build on those efforts in some small way. The aim is to have these pictures and bios readily available on the Cemetery's website. They have already upgraded the site to allow virtual visitors to move among the graves as if in Google Streetview and these stories will be accessible worldwide.

A word of explanation about the origins of the Cemetery is called for. The completely unexpected nature of the war and its pace in the first few months posed enormous challenges for an unsung aspect of military life: the recovery and care of the dead. I had no idea whatsoever before this project of the key role played by the wonderful US Quartermaster Corps. (I have to add a small note to mention that the current US Quartermaster General is Col Jin H Pak, born in South Korea.)

Almost as soon as US troops landed in Korea, there was a need for a temporary military cemetery, evacuation of remains being next to impossible in the circumstances. The US forces established eleven temporary cemeteries up and down the country, the

first in Daejeon in July 1950, which was quickly overrun, as were others in the course of the war. The quartermasters had to evacuate cemeteries as best they could, notably removing the bodies from the cemeteries in Incheon and Hungnam before the Chinese arrived.

All the same, many bodies ended up on the wrong side at the end of the War, including the numerous UN servicemen who had died while prisoners of war. In autumn 1954, Operation Glory arranged for the exchange and return of the remains of the servicemen of both sides of the conflict.

While the Quartermasters' main purpose was the recovery of US remains and repatriation to the States, they performed their incredible services for other UN forces, bringing them to Busan for burial. And in doing so, the standard of their record keeping is a joy to behold. There are not many sources for family historians that tell you not only the colour of their ancestor's eyes, height and weight, but will often have fingerprints, full dental records and a list of all their tattoos, beyond the normal military information.

Besides these burial records, my main sources have been the Cemetery's other records but above all the plentiful modern family history sites, mainly *Ancestry.com*, and online newspaper archives. I was amazed to find that out of these randomly selected servicemen, almost half of them can be found on online family trees. Sometimes the information is not right, and they may not even know their ancestor died in the Korean War, but it helped me enormously when somebody else had made a start. At the time of writing, I have been able to say something about the lives of 571 of the 808 identified graves, which is about 70%. But I keep searching and am able to add more as I go.

Of the 885 British graves from the Korean War, one was a civilian (a war correspondent), two from the Merchant Navy, three from the Royal Navy, and one from the RAF. Of the remainder, all are believed to be army, but 77 cannot be conclusively identified and their graves record them as "Soldier of the British Army".

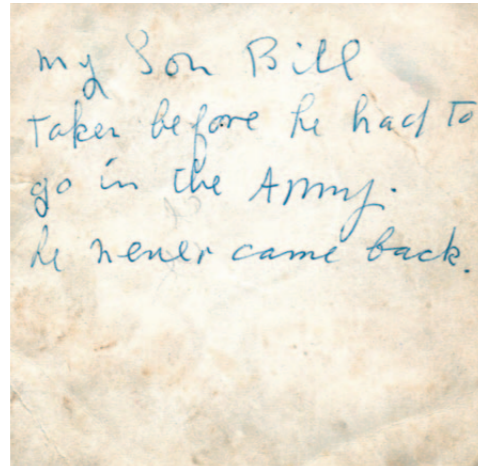
There have also been five later interments of veterans who wished to rest among their comrades, notably Bill Speakman VC, and Jim Grundy who had worked so hard to collect photographs of his fallen comrades. In addition, two British widows have joined their husbands in the cemetery.

It is no surprise that the majority of the interred are privates or equivalents (fusiliers, gunners, sappers, troopers, etc) and most of them, and indeed most of the lieutenants, will have been National Servicemen, but I have not found reliable statistics on the exact number.

In terms of the soldiers' regiments, the Gloucestershire Regiment has the most men buried there, but the Royal Artillery, the Black Watch, the



Private Frederick William Bartlett - Photo: Dianne Greenhow



King's Shropshire Light Infantry, the Royal Northumberland Rifles and the Royal Ulster Rifles are not far behind. In fact, a large number of regiments are represented since so many soldiers were attached to different regiments to make up operational numbers, especially when the Middlesex Regiment and the Argyll and Sutherlands were deployed first out of Hong Kong.

I wish I could show more of the 70+ pictures I have managed to find of the men buried there, but one photo can speak for them all, as well as for their mothers. The picture above of Private Frederick William Bartlett, from the Shropshires, was sent to me by his family, with its reverse inscribed, "My son Bill taken before he had to go in the Army. He never came back". I confess that brought tears to my eyes when I received it.

Bill Bartlett can serve as an example of the, sometimes minimal, information I was able to find about the burials. Apart from his birth and death dates, and in spite of being in touch with relatives, all I could say of him was, "Pte Bartlett was born in Gloucestershire, the son of Frederick William and Rose Evelyn May (née Daubney) Bartlett". But even this gives some small idea of his life and of course respects the two people who would have felt his loss most keenly – his parents.

There is no shortage of well-documented fatalities among those buried, notably, two awardees of a posthumous Victoria Cross. Major Kenneth Muir of the Argyll and Sutherlands defended a key position against overwhelming odds with a tragic error by the USAF resulting in his own men suffering casualties from napalm. Lieutenant Philip Curtis was killed leading his men against an enemy machine gun post in the Battle of the Imjin. His own wife having pre-deceased him, his daughter, Phillipa Susan, received the medal on his behalf from Her Majesty The Queen.

While for many of the servicemen I can find little more than the bare bones of their lives, others have surprising stories to tell, many of them poignant reminders of life in the 1930s and 40s. Let me share

an edited selection:

- **Pte McLaughlin** came from a family of eight children, six of whom were twins; tragically his mother died giving birth to the final set of twins when he was just two years old. He was brought up by an aunt and the other children had to be separated among relatives.
- **Lt Pack** was awarded a Military Cross the month before he led another patrol into enemy territory, resulting in his death. His father was a British diplomat who met his American wife, Betty Thorpe, while posted at the British Embassy in Washington. His father went on to a series of postings and reportedly committed suicide in Buenos Aires in 1945. His mother became a spy for the British intelligence service during the Second World War using her charms for the British war effort.
- **2nd/Lt Ruhemann** was born in Berlin, the son of Helmut Ruhemann. Helmut was an art restorer at the Berlin State Galleries and, being Jewish, emigrated to England in 1933; he worked for the National Gallery, the Tate Gallery and the Courtauld Institute and was exempted from internment as an enemy alien, allowing him to be evacuated with the National Gallery's pictures during the War. He was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1961.
- **Cpl Pegg** was born in Wandsworth, London, the son of Ernest Richard and Sybil Dorothy (née Jones) Pegg who had been actors and in silent movies in the First World War. His father later acted as a valet to the famous British actor and comedian, Stanley Holloway.
- **L/Cpl Nuttall** was born in Blackburn, Lancashire. His father had died in 1934 leaving his widow to bring up six children. By 1939, five were still living at home, the eldest of them working in the cotton mill, a 14-year-old son working underground in the colliery and the remaining three at school.
- **Cpl Powell** was born in Neath, the son of Noah William and Polly (née Day) Powell. He was captured at the Battle of the Imjin and died as a POW. He married Mabel Thomas in 1947, and she went on to marry in 1956 Cpl Powell's cousin, Alfred Clifford Powell. Not only were Albert John and Alfred Clifford's fathers brothers (Noah William and Alfred Nicholas Powell), their mothers were also sisters (Polly and Emily Day).
- **Cpl Williamson** had an impressive collection of tattoos, according to his burial record. The list of tattoos runs, "Tattoo on chest: lion. Right finger:



The Veterans Re-visit in April 2010. The last surviving holders of the George Cross and Victoria Cross from the War were among the veterans. Photo: Martin Uden

- letters, 'TRUE'. Right arm: flowers and scroll reading 'FATHER'. Bird, dagger, lion, snake and palm tree, horse's head, women in bathing suit, Popeye, sword piercing, bird, girl with wings. Girl with Navy officer hat. Left fingers with letters: 'LOVE'. Left arm: statue of Sphynx and large X with inscription, 'NWFD-Egypt-Lincoln C/REE'. Left arm: flower with inscription 'MOTHER', dagger piercing heart, (2) prize fighters, anchor with inscription, 'MONA', monkey, snake head of women."
- **Greaser Luigi Zammit** was born in Malta in 1906 and joined the British Merchant Marine in 1918, aged 12. His death record gives an address for him in Salford, Manchester, Lancashire. He was crushed by a watertight door while serving on the Empire Orwell.
- **Gunner Banbury** was born at Blaby, Leicestershire, and enlisted in the Royal Artillery. He was in a mortar battery supporting Australian patrols when he was wounded by a shell splinter in the abdomen. He was evacuated to the 8055th MASH where he died the following day. Doctor Richard Hornberger was serving at 8055th MASH at the time Gunner Banbury was there. Doctor Hornberger wrote the book which resulted in the film and hit TV series, *M*A*S*H*.
- **CSM Galloway** served with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders before transferring to the Cameron Highlanders. Colour Sergeant Major John Galloway, Sergeant John McGeogh, Sergeant William Stevenson and Sergeant Douglas Wood, all of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders,

died at 1.15 in the morning of 6 November 1955 as a result of a fire in their sleeping quarters.

- **2nd Lt George Prescott-Westcar** was the son of Sir William Villiers Beeston Prescott-Westcar, Bt, DSO. The baronetcy of the Prescott family had been created in 1794, but George was the only son of Sir William, so the title became extinct on Sir William's death in 1959.
- **Rifleman Harold Liddle** was trying to evade the Germans after the British retreat from Dunkirk when he sought shelter with a Belgian family. He was captured by the Germans; the couple who tended to him were killed by the Nazis and their

daughter sent to a concentration camp. When she returned at the end of war, she was imprisoned on suspicion that she had betrayed her parents. Harold, however, tracked her down and secured her release, and married her in 1946. He left the army but was called up as a reservist and was killed at the battle of the Imjin.

- **Cpl Thomas Price** had married Edna Firth in Barnsley, Yorkshire in 1944 and they had one daughter, Elaine. He had many tattoos on his arms, among them on his right upper arm was one of two hands clasped and the words, 'Tom, Edna & Elaine'.
- **Sgt Baggott** died during the Battle of the Imjin. L/Cpl Derek Milnes, also a Northumberland Fusilier, wrote a poem about the action on 22 April 1952, in which he says:

*"There's another three sergeants who did quite a lot,
Their names are Donald, Sharp and Baggott.
They fought a rearguard with rifle and Sten
With no thought for themselves but only their men.
They were last seen on a hillside, firing fast,
And stayed, we presume, till the wounded were past.
No news of them since, no news of them yet,
But wherever they are, they know WE won't forget."*

Sgt Donald and Fusilier Sharp are also buried in the UNMCK.

At the Going Down of the Sun and in the Morning, We Will Remember Them.

WALKING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS ON IWO JIMA

Harlan Glenn



The view from Marine Air of Iwo Jima - 2009

The World War Two island battlefield of Iwo Jima is for some a seemingly unobtainable dream to revisit and explore. For others it has become a yearly pilgrimage for the veterans of and their families to return to for as long as they have the means and the good health to do so.

I consider myself fortunate as I have been able to extensively explore the island upon five trips and in the years of 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009.

2002, my first trip and the only occasion where I went as a paid member with tour group Military Historical Tours. As soon as boots were on the ground a select group of us quickly broke free to better explore our own unique points of interest. Of the five trips this was to be the most time capsule-like experience as the grounds had yet to be pilfered by artefact hunters.

2003, my first time to serve as a battlefield guide where over 14 days I led a group of graphic artists from Electronic Arts who were designing their WWII video game *PACIFIC ASSAULT*. As with all trips to follow we explored the islands of Saipan, Iwo Jima and Peleliu.

2005, my third trip and the 60th anniversary of the 1945 battle. Here we saw the largest contingent of Iwo Jima veterans returning to the island, which for most of them was their first time back since the war. On this trip I served double duty as both a guide for Digital Ranch and R Lee Ermey who wanted to shoot an Iwo Jima special for *'The History Channel'*, and my second duty to assist my late and dear friend Pharmacist's Mate 3rd Class Daniel B Thomas who a combat corpsman with the 23rd Marines (4th Marine Division) to revisit the island for what was to be his last time while among the living.

2007, my fourth trip, I returned as a private battlefield guide for a historical enthusiast who wanted to quote SEE and DO what I had done on



2002 - Japanese Betty Bomber turned air raid shelter along Motoyama #1 air strip.

previous trips. On this return trip I was also able to place my late friend Danny Thomas' cremated remains to a specific section of Yellow Beach II, where he and his best friend Chick had landed on D-Day February 19th, 1945. Nicknamed 'Chick' as he had lied about his age to join the Marines (at age 15) and was killed as he and Danny ran down the ramp of their landing craft. Thus Danny wanted to be reunited with his fallen friend and thanks to a well to do historical enthusiast I was able to return to Iwo to fulfill Danny's last wish.

2009 my fifth trip to the island (thanks to friends in high places and Sergeant Major Bases Japan Robert Mastriano) where I given the full support of the Marine Corps with unlimited access to explore the island and its labyrinth of tunnels for three days to film and document said tunnels on film and present in



Standing atop the summit of Suribachi looking down upon Green Beach I and some Marine landing exercises.



Entrance of a small fortified cave just south of Kitano Point. Inside was a rifle rack, rotted leather shoes, gas masks and assorted Japanese personal items.

2003



Type 97 20mm automatic gun pill box, Yellow Beach II.



Yellow Beach II looking south towards Mount Suribachi

my Military Channel series pilot episode *'BATTLE RATS IWO JIMA'*. Over these three days and two nights my team of Cameraman Andy Parke, Chirpa Matt de los mutante', Co-Host SgtMaj Robert Mastriano and a 2nd Lieutenant from Marine Corps Public Affairs, managed to explore and film in some 54 different tunnel networks including the inner passageways of Mount Suribachi and Hill 362A.

An ending highlight for this trip was reascending Mount Suribachi to spread the cremated remains of a Sergeant Padell HQ-2-24's who's last request was to be returned to Iwo and placed atop the summit thus reunited with fellow Marines who had fallen in the 1945 battle.



2007 - Spreading Phm. 3c. Daniel B. Thomas' remains upon Yellow Beach II. His actual Helmet and helmet cover rest in the right foreground.



2009 - Climbing Mount Suribachi and Returning the cremated remains of Sgt. Leon Padell atop the summit.



GUILD *Event*

Ypres Reconnaissance 11th-15th March 2024

Paul Oldfield

This recce focussed on some less well-known aspects of the battles around Ypres 1914-18. John Cotterill put together a wide ranging, imaginative and diverse programme over the three days on the ground. Day 1 focussed upon the Indian Corps' operations in October 1914 and April 1915. Day 2 switched to various support aspects of the Third Battle of Ypres (command, control, communications, transport, heavy artillery and medical). The final day looked at elements of the Battle of the Lys in April 1918 in and around the Salient. There were eighteen participants, nine of whom volunteered to run stands.



John Cotterill getting the tour off to a flying start at the Indian Corps memorial near Hollebeke, describing the Corps' structure and arrival, in what was to become, the Salient.



Nick Saunders pointing out the site of Jardine's Farm in 1914, where Sepoy (later Subadar) Khudadad Khan (1888-1971), 129th Baluchis earned the first VC to a native born Indian and Muslim on 31st October 1914. John Cotterill does not appear to be totally convinced.



In driving rain at the London Scottish Memorial, Bryan Rogers stoically describes the defence of Messines Ridge on 30th October 1914 by the Household Cavalry Composite Regiment.



Just when you thought it could not get any worse.....on Mauser Ridge in even heavier rain and blustery conditions. Simon Burgess describes the German advance following the first gas attacks in April 1915. This was followed by Nick Saunders describing another Indian VC action by Jemadar Mir Dast, 55th Coke's Rifles attached 57th Wilde's Rifles, on 26th April 1915.



John 'Handout' Hamill finally achieves his ambition of becoming a stationmaster. He is briefing on the extensive railway system north of Poperinghe. This was vital for the timely arrival of the vast quantities of supplies and equipment required by Fifth Army to conduct the Third Ypres battles. The group is standing at the point where a railway line crossed the N321 road north of Poperinghe at International Corner. Marc Yates discovered numerous lumps of ballast in the neighbouring field that would have formed the track bed. The Chairman, on the right, joined us for part of the recce.



Ian Doyle describing the activities of II Corps Heavy Artillery Group north of Dickebusch (the church is in the right distance). Rather aptly there was an unexploded German medium shell under the prominent bush in the centre.



Viv Whelpton presenting at the site of Captain Eric Dougall's VC action on Messines Ridge on 10th April 1918. Wyttschaete church is in the right background.



Mark Yates describing the medevac system and the activities of an advanced dressing station at Essex Farm. John Richardson was unfortunately prevented from leading this stand and Mark stepped in at short notice. After a complete day of support activities, John Cotterill ensured we finished with a more traditional bombs, bayonets and bullets stand at Birr Cross Roads, describing 8th Division 'going over the bags' on 31st July 1917. Marc picked up an intact shell fuze cap there.



On the final day, John Cotterill describes the ferocious fighting on Kemmel Hill 17th-19th April 1918. Messines Ridge is in the right distance (honestly). On the far right (out of picture) could be seen the Double Crassier at Loos and the Canadian Memorial on Vimy Ridge. With such extensive and distant views, you do not need to be a military genius to work out the significance of the Mount Kemmel feature.



Almost at the end of the final day Graham Roberts tells the group about the stand of 1/5th West Yorkshire on this spot, on 25th April 1918, just west of Wytchaete. The spire of the church is visible behind the farm building on the extreme left.



The recce group at the French Memorial on Mount Kemmel, minus Bryan Rogers who was unavoidably away on other business for a few hours. The picture was taken by a very kind Belgian motorist who happened to be passing well he was passing until James Davis dragged him out of his car!

The three days were long and tiring but full of new interest. All the presenters pulled out the stops and provided in depth coverage of their various subjects. Overall, the recce was a huge success, opening up new areas for study and presentation on future tours. This is exactly what Guild recces are all about.



Normality is resumed as the guides revert to what they do best - yarn, eat and drink. This was upstairs at Den Anker, Ypres, just before another killer Cotterill quiz back at the Hotel Albion. Just for the record, the red faces are due to the wind and sun earlier that day!

THE HOME GUARD

Robert Shaw

With the last of the cast of “Dads Army”, Ian Lavender, passing away at the age of 77, there has been the end of an iconic series with spin off films that kept us all entertained from 1968 to 1977 (apart from John Cotterill who was obviously far too young to have watched it). The comedy, which had 9 series of 80 episodes, spawned a film in 1971 and a 2016 film starring Toby Jones and Catherine Zeta Jones. The immortal lines of “stupid boy” and “don’t tell him Pike” will continue to adorn mugs and other items for the foreseeable future.



The immortal lines of “stupid boy” and “don’t tell him Pike” will continue to adorn mugs and other items for the foreseeable future. Written by Jimmy Perry (who had served in the LDV during WW2) and David Croft, the series and spin off films were all about a local detachment of the ‘Home Guard’ in the fictional town of Walmington-on-Sea, not far from Eastbourne. It was actually filmed in and around Thetford in Norfolk and the military training area STANTA. Jimmy Perry based the storylines on his experiences as a 16-year-old in the LDV in Hertfordshire. His mum was always worried he would catch a cold being out at night and would make him wrap up warm.



For those giving Battlefield tours in UK, there is a wealth of infrastructure and traces of the Home Guard that can be used to talk about, whether as a ‘coach filler’ or for a specific stand. The Home Guard was originally called the Local Defence Volunteers (LDV), but they became humorously known as the ‘Look, Duck and Vanish’. They were later renamed the ‘Home Guard’ and it was made up of people that were ineligible for military service, either due to age, medical reasons or being in a reserved occupation. Officially the eligible age was from 17 to 65 years old but one platoon was known for having a 14-year-old and three 80-year-olds in it. The force operated from 1940 to 1944 and when it disbanded on 31st December 1945 it had 1.5 million volunteers. Their role was to defend key factories, airfields and other essential sites from saboteurs and Fallschirmjager and in event of German invasion (Operation Sealion) they were to slow down the German rate of advance (through the use of strongpoints with mutual support) to allow the Regular Army time to regroup. Other roles were to prevent lines of communication

from being clogged with refugees, man checkpoints and patrol the coastal areas (some on foot, bikes, horseback and private river craft).

There was initially much frustration amongst members as although the threat seemed very real and they were keen to do their bit, it was recognised that the rearming and reequipping of the regular forces would be the priority, especially as a lot of weapons and equipment had been left in France during Operation Dynamo. Initially volunteers only received an armband with the letter LDV printed on it and WW1 Lee Enfield Rifles, along with instructions on the manufacture of Molotov cocktails. This was followed rapidly by Springfield rifles and Thompson sub machine guns from the USA. Alongside the issue of state-manufactured weapons, there was also a lot of improvisation, especially grenades, mortars and grenade projectors. The members were paid, however one wrote to The Times newspaper to complain saying they were all keen to do the job and defend Britain for free. Just imagine how popular he was! One question frequently asked is did the Home



Guard see any action? The Home Guard did have some specialist elements which did see action including the manning of Anti-Aircraft Batteries and Bomb Disposal. The AA Batteries are credited with shooting down various German Aircraft and some V1 'Doodlebug' flying bombs, and they lost 1,206 members to unexploded ordnance.

One element, hidden within the Home Guard, was the Auxiliary Units or 'stay behinds' whose role was to hide in Operational Bases (think small Nissen Hut underground) with two weeks of Rations, explosives, ammunition and a sense of humour and then pop up behind the German lines (they were only to be activated in the event of invasion) to 'blow up' ammunition and supply dumps, parked aircraft, sabotage railway lines and bridges and target German Commanders. They also had a responsibility to assassinate collaborators. In August 1940, the Home Office and MI5 had drawn up a list of about 1,000 people who it deemed would be likely to assist the enemy and who were to be rounded up by the Police. For those that escaped the Police and MI5 dragnet, the Auxiliary patrols were to rapidly adjust their lifetime expectations once they were in occupied territory.

The Home Guard's basic operating unit was the (mostly independent) Platoon which had 25-30 men. These then formed companies and Battalions, and by the end of 1940, the force had 1,200 Battalions, 5,000 Companies and 25,000 Platoons. Each Platoon had a runner (who was usually a motorbike owner) as

they weren't issued radio sets until 1942, but at least the runners were more reliable than the current issue Bowman! There was also a sniper post in each Platoon, issued with a M1917 Enfield rifle. Each Platoon had three sections of eight men that consisted of a gun group that had a Browning Automatic Rifle or a Lewis Gun and a Rifle Group that had M1917 Enfield Rifles (although some carried shotguns), grenades and a Thompson or Sten SMG. The tactics to be used to delay and impede the German advance was to use urban terrain where their lines of communication were shorter, their weapons more effective, there was more cover from view and from fire and German armoured vehicles could be attacked from above with a well-placed Molotov cocktail onto the engine deck or through any available open hatch!

The Home Guard also produced improvised armoured vehicles, normally by adding steel plating to commercial and privately owned vehicles. Lord Beaverbrook sponsored the introduction of the Car Armoured Light Standard which was based on a commercial car body with a light machine gun (LMG) which became known as the Beaverette. A training school was set up at Osterley Park in July 1940 by Tom Wintringham who passed on his experience as a dedicated communist and veteran of the Spanish Civil War. The training was later taken over by the army and Tom resigned in April 1941. Ironically, he couldn't join the Home Guard as one couldn't join if a communist or fascist. When they did arrive, uniforms consisted of the Battle dress issued to the regular army and a simplified set of webbing based on the 1937 pattern in service but made of leather and canvas. The Home Guard also became the subjects of films such as *Mrs Miniver* and *Went the Day Well?* which were aimed at the American market to promote pro-British sentiments. Americans living in Britain signed up and formed the 1st American Squadron of the Home Guard, based in London, on 1st June 1940. After D Day, and the Allies were successfully driving towards Germany, the Home Guard was stood down 3rd December 1944 and disbanded on 31st December 1945. The members were given a certificate and if they had served longer than three years, they could be awarded the defence medal. The Home Guard had both compliments (the CO of the Aberdeen Bn said his men were the visible part of the 'spirit of resistance') and detractors (the CO of Glasgow said "*criminals joined it to loot houses during the Blitz*"), but despite the comedy view portrayed by the Dad's Army series, we couldn't have won the war without them.

The concept actually came back into vogue in the mid to late-fifties during the Cold War and then again, as the Home Service Force during the mid-eighties, but that's another story for later.

APPROACHING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NORMANDY LANDINGS

Tonie and Valmai Holt

As the 80th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings approaches we are reminded of our early visits to the Normandy Beaches. Our original visit there was on our very first Battlefield Tour, in 1977 – though Tonie had already been there in 1967 while at Staff College.

It happened almost by accident, when Purnell's Military Book Club took our book *Till the Boys Come Home*, as their main choice. During lunch with their Managing Director we suggested that, as an added benefit to Club membership and encouragement to stay longer, a battlefield tour to the places they read about might be a good idea. He enthusiastically agreed, and a trial mailing promotion of 20,000 brochures was sent to members offering a tour which started at Ypres, went on to the Somme and ended in Normandy. (*We later decided that to mix battlefields in two wars in such a way was not such a good idea...*)

The tour, planned as a one-off event, was very soon overbooked and we embarked on our very first tour 'recce' to choose the route, hotels etc. At that time there was no established infrastructure for substantial battlefield tourism because such a thing didn't exist.

To concentrate on the Normandy section, at that time:

- No motorways connected the Channel Ports of Calais and Boulogne to Normandy.
- Travel along the D Day Beaches from Caen to Cherbourg was along the N13 which passed through all the small towns and villages en route, a distance of some 80 miles. There were no by-pass roads.
- There were no Remembrance Tours, Circuits, Trails or Information Boards.
- Memorials were poorly maintained and no listing of them existed.
- There were few hotels, and those available were not accustomed to receiving British groups - for instance chicken and chips was thought generally to be the only acceptable menu for Ros Bifs.
- At this time the only existing, or soon to exist, museums were:
 - * Cherbourg: Fort du Roule, inaugurated in 1954 with American support.
 - * Ste Mere Eglise: USA Airborne Museum, opened on 6 June 1964.

- * Arromanches: opened in 1954, inaugurated by President Rene Coty.
- * Ouistreham: Musee No 4 Commando, opened early 1970s.
- * Pegasus Bridge Café: opened in 1974 by Gen Gale. (*In the late 1990s Arlette Gondrée bought the café at an auction in order to preserve it. We made a considerable contribution to the cost.*)
- * Tilly sur Seullès: opened 6 June 1979.

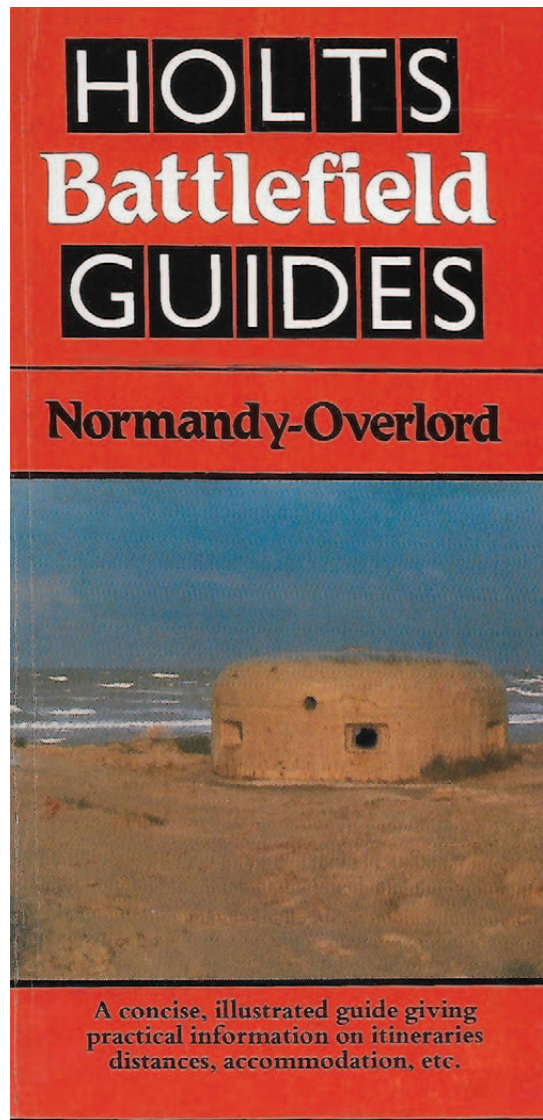
Only the Arromanches and Ste Mere Eglise museums received many visitors, mainly French, at this time.

We soon made contact with M Raymond Triboulet, Chairman of the Comité du Débarquement, responsible for memorialising the D Day Landings, who gave us advice, encouragement and support.

Somewhat to our surprise the passengers on this inaugural tour – which quickly had to be followed by a repetition as there were so many bookings – were highly enthusiastic about the experience and made suggestions for future tours: from the American Civil War sites to El Alamein, Italy, Berlin etc etc... And so our Battlefield Tour career started and, gradually, our series of Battlefield Guidebooks.

Our second guidebook was a slim, 64-page pocket-sized guide to Normandy-Overlord, with an introduction by Calvados Tourist Officer, Charles Barbier, and much invaluable information from Lord Lovat's Piper, Bill Millin; Major John Howard, leader of the glider landings at Pegasus Bridge; Col Tod Sweeney of the Ox & Bucks; Philippe Jutras, US Veteran, Ste Mere Eglise and many other veterans. It was published in 1983 by Leo Cooper (*whose wife, our friend Jilly Cooper, was recently awarded the DBE*) in time for the 1984 40th Anniversary.

By this time we had made many tours to Normandy, including Pilgrimages for the Royal British Legion Normandy widows. These started in 1982 when the RBL Pilgrimage leader, John



A concise, illustrated guide giving practical information on itineraries, distances, accommodation, etc.

Our second Battlefield Guidebook – to Normandy-Overlord, 1983.

Another friend was the aforementioned Charles Barbier (with whom we are still in touch), and when all these organisations became aware of the need to start planning for the 40th Anniversary, we took Charles to New York to talk to various US Normandy Veteran Associations which led to many American groups attending the Anniversary. At that time Charles had a very small allowance for foreign travel and we had to lend him money for his hotel.

In the UK we organised a meeting at Grosvenor House in London, with the financial support of British Airways and Townsend Thoresen, cross-Channel operators. It was attended by representatives of the MOD, the American Embassy, and Tourist Officers from Portsmouth, Southampton, Calvados and La Manche.

The MOD representative felt that 'there was no interest' in the commemoration, but fortunately the French and Americans were most enthusiastic and Portsmouth and Southampton and British Airways appointed us as Military Tours Consultants.

The MOD was not alone in feeling 'there was no interest'. In November 1983 we wrote to HM Queen Elizabeth asking if she would be attending the 40th Anniversary. On 6 December we received a reply from Buckingham Palace stating that several members of the Royal Family were considering invitations to participate in the ceremonies but it was 'unlikely that Her Majesty The Queen herself would participate.'

We then invited representatives from all the active main Regimental and Corps Associations, plus members of the national press to come to Normandy on an 'educational' visit, sponsored by Townsend Thoresen. It was a great success and we conducted some 60 people on a week's tour of all the beaches. All participants committed to bringing regimental groups to Normandy in 1984.

So many 40th Anniversary Tours were being booked that we had to gather a group of 20 potential new guides – ex-military and civilian historians – and start training sessions in our office

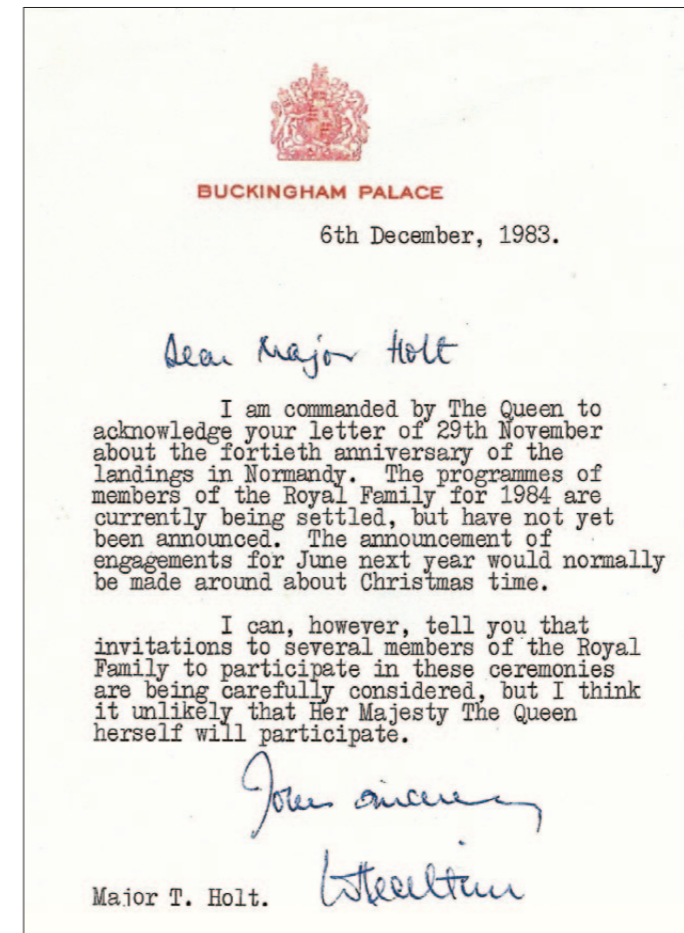
Crosskey, suddenly died. The RBL asked us if we would take over, which we were very honoured to do. They were mostly run by our guide Piers Storie-Pugh who then left Holts' to join the RBL to run Pilgrimages when the Government started the War Widows Grant in Aid Scheme.

We were soon supported by the Comité du Débarquement, the Mayors of Caen, Bayeux and Arromanches and the Association France-Grande Bretagne.

We also became great friends with Bill Millin, Lord Lovat's Piper, who piped No. 4 Commando as they landed on SWORD Beach on 6 June. He also piped them to (though not over) Pegasus Bridge the following day. Bill came on several of our tours and also piped at our daughter's wedding.



Bill Millin piping Valmai Holt and a tour group over Pegasus Bridge.



Letter from Buckingham Palace, 6 December 1983, re the Royal Family and the 40th Anniversary Ceremonies.

in Sandwich, followed by a week on the ground in Normandy (which was covered by BBC breakfast tv). Our daughter Sian (who conducted the Royal British Legion Widows' tour), her then-husband Keith and our son Gareth, who were all familiar with the Landing Beaches, also joined the team on the actual Anniversary tour. Hotels throughout the district, and as far away as Rouen, had to be booked to take the numerous groups.

The 40th Anniversary Commemorations were an outstanding success. When the Presidents of France and of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada, members of Belgian and Danish Royal families announced they would be present, the British Royal family also announced that HM Queen Elizabeth and other members would indeed be attending.

There were many memorable moments for our guides during the various commemorations during the anniversary, some because of the great number of visitors to Normandy at the time and some very difficult to handle. There were also tour groups before and

after the actual anniversary.

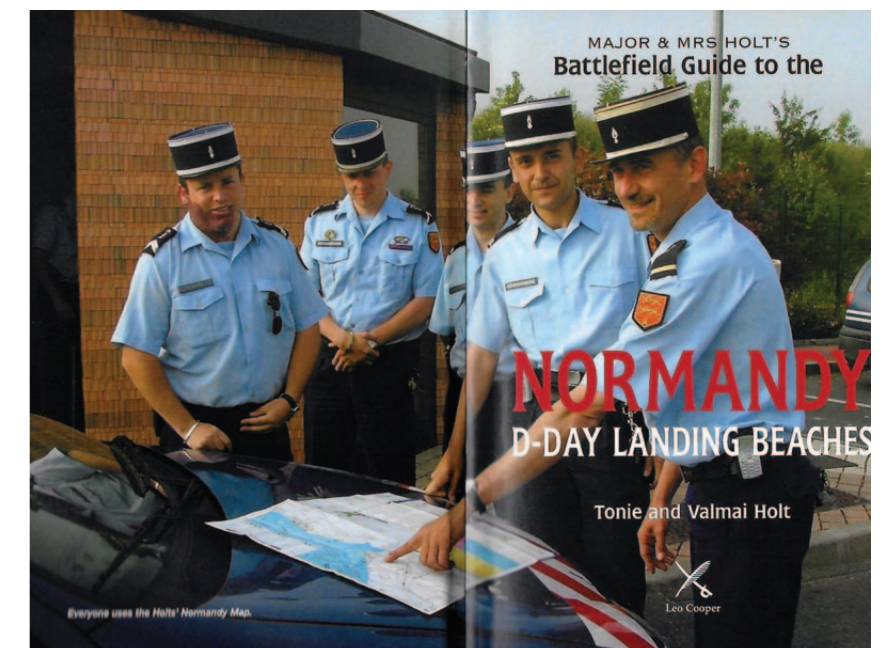
Valmai for instance was based at the Novotel, Caen, for several weeks and, as well as conducting her own groups, had to try and sort out any problems for other guides.

For the actual anniversary she conducted a group of American journalists, most of whom had been in the area in 1944. Despite their maturity they couldn't resist a good story and often kept their coach waiting as they made telephone calls to newspapers in the USA with what they considered to be a scoop.

On the actual 6th of June the main ceremony was held at Utah Beach. Valmai lined her group of journalists on the path that led to the site of the International Commemoration. All the VIPs, including Royalty, Presidents and Prime Ministers passed by and, as President Ronald Reagan reached her group, he broke away towards them shouting 'Hi Barney'. He had spotted Col Oldfield, who had been press aide to Supreme Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower during WW2. Barney went on to work as publicist and press agent for stars such as Ronald Reagan, Errol Flynn, Elizabeth Taylor, as a journalist for several newspapers... Later he became an active philanthropist and remained a good friend with the Holts until his death in March 2003.

Tonie joined Valmai at the Novotel over the anniversary period and conducted a tour which included many veterans. On the 6 June he took them to various villages where the veterans had served and which were having their own commemorations, after which much Calvados had been consumed.

Meanwhile the VIPs from the Omaha Commemoration drove back towards Caen along the



Some of the hundreds of Gendarmes from all parts of France who come to Normandy to assist during important anniversaries. This picture was used as the frontispiece in several of our later Normandy Guide Books.

main road, which was closed to all other traffic and which was lined by some of the hundreds of gendarmes who had been called in from all over France. Unaware of this, Tonie tried to join the road as he returned from the various villages. At first he was forbidden by a Gendarme who then spotted the Souvenir Francais badge on the coach (which also bore a large 'Holts' Battlefield Tours' sign) and graciously beckoned him to join the VIPs. Some of those Gendarmes we photographed and used as the frontispiece for several of our later Normandy Guidebooks.

Son-in-law Keith accompanied the Commando group, the highlight of whose tour was to revisit the farm in Amfreville owned by farmer Bernard Saulnier where they had fought in June 1944. Bernard always welcomed them with open arms and copious mugs of Calvados. Arriving back at their hotel after their visit the drunken group ripped the door knobs off their bedrooms and laughingly threw them at Keith.

Staying in a hotel near Caen were experienced Holt Guide and author Richard Devonald Lewis and one of the new people we had trained for the anniversary tours. She (who will remain nameless and referred to as 'X') was guiding a group of South African veterans who complained to Richard that, instead of giving the commentary she had been taught, she was expressing her own deep feelings about the current state of South Africa. On returning to the hotel 'X' began to act extremely strangely and Richard locked her in her room and phoned Valmai at the Caen Novotel. Valmai rushed to the hotel and, confirming Richard's concern, packed up 'X's clothes and took her back to the Novotel, where she remained locked in until Valmai, now also with Tonie, returned to Portsmouth by ferry. During the crossing 'X' managed to get to the bar, where she informed the staff that she was a friend of royalty and would inform Prince Andrew of her treatment! Arriving at Portsmouth 'X's behaviour was impossible and Tonie and Valmai got her accepted in a Portsmouth mental hospital.

'X' lived near the Holts and several weeks later they found a long scratch along their car which was parked in Sandwich and it was reported to have been done by none other than 'X'!

Fortunately most of the tours went smoothly as our groups attended many of the emotional ceremonies, including that at the CWGC at Bayeux, attended by HM Queen Elizabeth.

After the 40th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings our tours continued and widened – to include destinations such as Vietnam, Alamein, Germany, Italy, the Falklands, Egypt, India, the USA, Malta, The Channel Islands, Gallipoli and, after Perestroika, Russia and The Crimea and a good many more.

Our book writing – of battlefield guides, biographies of war poets, of Kipling's son, of cartoonist Bruce Bairnsfather etc, continued, taking up more of our time. We therefore sold our Tour Company (which to this day still bears the Holts' name) so that we could concentrate on our writing and eventually we wrote more than 30 books.

Then, in 2001, Graeme Cooper came to visit us in Woodnesborough to discuss the idea of creating a Guild of Battlefield Guides. We thought it was a great idea and once the Guild had been formed we were extremely honoured to be invited to become Honorary Members.

We have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in many Guild events, notably the Annual get-together. Then three years ago we had the pleasure of offering 'The Old Bill Award' to the member who shared Old Bill's qualities of steadfastness and good humour, both in times of adversity and good fortune. The well-deserved members so far have been Andy Thompson, Terry Webb (both sadly missed) and John Hamill. Our best wishes go to this year's winner, John Cotterill, and to all those who will be conducting tours to Normandy for the 80th Anniversary.



At CWGC HQ, November 2017. L to R Tonie Holt, then-Director of the CWGC, Victoria Wallace, Historian Glyn Pryor, Liz Woodfield and then-GBG Chairman, Mike Peters.

FIELDguides



Daphne Tank, built in Wednesbury, West Midlands from plans drawn in Lincoln



Daphne was damaged by German artillery on 21st August 1917 at the Ypres Salient and taken away for repair.



Guide Robert Shaw and Dale Dye Jr doing technical advice for the US National WW2 Museum Masters of the Air miniseries.



Tim Lynch and Gaz Edwards at the Soviet cemetery in Orianburg, North of Berlin, having just qualified as Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Guides on behalf of Anglia Tours.

NEWmembers:

New members who have been welcomed to the Guild between the AGM issue 2024 and the date of publication.

Paul Elgood joins from East Sussex. His interest is WW1

Allan Hunn joins from Wiltshire. His interests are WWII Escape & Evasion

Oscar Hina joins from Gloucestershire. His interests are the initial stages of WWII

GUILDevent - The 2023 AGM



The AGM photo, its simply not true that it's a bunch of old blokes!



Andy Johnson received the Will Townsend Award for sharing his extensive knowledge knowledge of Artillery.



John Cotterill receiving the Old Bill award for his fantastic sense of humour.



The Richard Holmes award was presented to Sue King as head of the Management Board Review Team.



The AGM visited the BBMF and received a guided tour of the hanger. Here they are looking at a Dakota aircraft.



John Cotterill and fellow guides at the post AGM visit to the Lincolnshire Tank Museum. He is busy reminding them they aren't here to enjoy themselves!

THE NATHANIEL WADE AWARD GOES TO...CWGC

Andrew Burcher

The Nathaniel Wade Award allows the Guild to publicly recognise the contribution of an individual, group or organisation associated with the Guild, who through their efforts has made a significant contribution to the craft of battlefield guiding and the wider Military History community.

Enjoying the company of friends and fellow guides at our excellent annual conference, I was struck by the enthusiasm by which Mike Scott's announcement that the recipient of the Nathaniel Wade Award is, for 2023, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The applause hung in the air those few moments longer to be noticeable; it was a popular decision. Ever the opportunist, I offered to Tim Stoneman that I could deliver the Award to Claire Horton, the Director General of the CWGC.

Our Management Board met on the Sunday of our Guild Conference and agreed to take me up on the offer. Driving back to my home in sunny Kent that day, I stumbled through the front door with the large protective box containing the Award. If ever there was any doubt that she is the intelligent one in our relationship, Mrs Burcher pointed out that I had planned to travel to the event in Poperinge by motorcycle. Glancing at the large heavy box, I inwardly conceded that her point was rather valid.

A dozen days later, I attended another black-tie affair, this time at Talbot House, Poperinge. This was an Ambassadors' dinner to promote the House and, in case you were wondering, no not one foil-wrapped nutty chocolate was to be seen. Resplendent in their fine uniforms and finery, Ambassadors, Adjutant-Majors, Defence Attachés, Military Consuls all enjoyed the hearty five course supper.

Each course was interposed with a walk around the main House, the museum, the concert hall and, of course, the (candlelit) Upper Room. Very special. Each time Simon Louagie's engaging and energetic presentation of the history of the House, added enormously to the evening.

Between one of the five courses, I was invited speak to those gathered and explained that, while I stood before them as a rather overdressed motorcycle courier, the box and the Award made it all the way... and how amazing Super Glue can be.

Of course, I jest, the Award made it one piece and after reading over Mike's well-chosen words, I asked my friend and president of the Old Talbot House

Association, Ian Hussain, to present the award to Claire Horton.

In closing, I should like to add my thanks for the Guild for entrusting me with this important mission. Claire Horton's words in acceptance were, of course, delivered with her usual eloquence and elegance. As I recounted to those present that evening, Tubby Clayton's message speaks to us in the values of our Guild, the work of the CWGC and the home of Tubby's message, something with which those present that evening wholeheartedly agreed.

The Nathaniel Wade Award is named after one of the first Battlefield Guides. Wade was a Bristol lawyer and the hardworking creator of the rebel army during the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685. He was commissioned major by the Duke, commanded The Red (Monmouth's) Regiment and fought at Bridport, Norton St. Philip and Sedgemoor. Captured, he turned king's evidence and wrote a very detailed, day-by-day account of the campaign although only naming men already dead or under sentence of death. To gain dissenter support, James II made the pardoned Wade Town Clerk of Bristol and to further his history of his own times had him conduct a royal tour of the Sedgemoor battlefield.

2023 – CWGC

On this occasion the Board of the Guild of Battlefield Guides wished to recognise the enduring commitment of the CWGC to preserving battlefield history and archaeology through the cemeteries and memorials throughout the world. More than this the CWGC is going further in achieving Guild objectives of raising understanding of the battlefields and promote education of battlefield visitors. This is done through the visitor centres, cemetery information boards, the volunteer guides and interns, the CWGC website, the non-commemoration program and outreach workers. All of these take the work of the CWGC beyond care of cemeteries and memorials to a wider set of work, that links closely to the aims of the Guild, and we wish to recognise that this year.



GUILD conversation with Ian Mitchell

RESEARCHING WW2 BATTLEFIELD STORIES ON THE BRITISH ARMY

EDITOR: I am pleased to say Ian Mitchell agreed to be interviewed again about research sources for WW2. This time we are covering the British Army in the Second World War. Ian - so what if anything is different about research sources for the British Army in WW2 given say a couple of scenarios of your choice.

IAN: Well first of all my two scenarios are D Day (SWORD and GOLD Beaches) and the Adriatic Campaign in 1943 and the answer is probably that British Army sources are just as comprehensive but not so easy or cheap to access. For example all the US Army official histories are on line, free and have decent indexing systems this is not the case for the British ones. A couple of on line sources for selected British Official histories are:

The Internet Archive - a US website - <https://archive.org/>

Hyper war section of the ibiblio website - www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar

The usual computer security health warnings of course apply when accessing any website by the way.

EDITOR: I was intrigued by your choice of the 1943 Adriatic campaign and I will come back to that later but first of all what about primary sources for example War Diaries for SWORD and GOLD Beaches?

IAN: War Diaries for units can be great sources of valuable information when researching a battle or action but you have to be very wary of them as an historian and guide. Furthermore The National Archives (TNA) has done a great job on storing war diaries and sadly a lousy job on enabling people to find what they want quickly on line at the TNA website and at KEW. The classification system is unique to the TNA and it takes a lot of time to understand it. Moreover you have to travel to Kew, park there (it costs) find the item and then read it and you are only allowed five items at a time. The web-link for on line guides on how to use it for WW2 sources however is

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/second-world-war/

If you have not been there before be aware you need to register for a reader's ticket to access war diaries in the reading room and spend time taking a test this will take up at least the first hour of your visit. I like short cuts so if you have a specific question



The reading room at the National Archives

about war diaries for a British unit a good place to start is WW2 Talk a forum I have mentioned before. It is specifically focused on British and Commonwealth Forces and has some real anoraks - sorry - I mean specialists who can help with very specific enquiries. The forum link is <http://www2talk.com> - Another short cut can be achieved by buying a compendium of the all the war diaries for D Day. Paul Winter - D Day Documents Bloomsbury Press, 2014.

EDITOR: What about oral interviews as a research source say for British units at SWORD or GOLD or D Day?

IAN: I am delighted you asked that question because it allows me to highlight a fantastic resource held by the Imperial War Museum. Someone I am not sure who had the foresight to conduct a huge effort back in the 1980s and 1990s to conduct taped interviews (yes they were taped!) with over 3,000 veterans including, by my guess over 300 who took part in D Day and 30-50 who landed on SWORD beach.

I picked this photo as it shows the 15 inch guns one of which is from the battleship HMS Ramillies which bombarded gun batteries at SWORD Beach. If I didn't mention that Tim Stoneman our resident naval specialist would never forgive me! The link to the IWM oral history collection is here once again I will warn you that it is not an easy database to search. www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80013637 If you click on this link you will access Eric



Imperial War Museum location of Oral History collection

Maps are really important then and a very useful resource for original GSGS maps in Italy for example is the Perry - Castaneda collection. This is not simple to access the link to the army maps is: *Army Map Service - Perry-Castañeda Map Collection - UT Library Online (utexas.edu)*

EDITOR: *That reminds me to ask why you chose the Adriatic campaign I assume you mean the 8th Army's operations from September 1943.*

IAN: Yes. Well the main reason was that it is such a neglected campaign by military historians and those who know me well know I like to tread the path least taken as an historian. This was Monty's last campaign in command of the 8th Army and he was followed by Oliver Leese. It is a period that has not been studied much in detail except by some of our Italian colleagues and lately yours truly. The fighting in the mountains in bad weather and against tough German resistance was extremely difficult and has some fascinating battles against all odds.

Ashcroft's account of SWORD beach. Eric Ashcroft by the way was Lord Ashcroft's father. But everyone knows what happened on SWORD beach - don't they after all its staple and simple guiding stuff - some of my fellow guides might say in reply? (*EDITOR Just for the record I didn't say that!*) Well I suppose if you focus on Bill Millin's statue you'll be fine but if you really want to describe in detail what happened on QUEEN RED in detail then you could be in trouble. The IWM oral recordings can help there - they provide fantastic primary source material and great stories that are almost unknown. There is a great recording of a 2nd East Yorkshire officer's account of his Platoon on D Day. The same applies for actions during the Adriatic campaign, for example the forgotten battle of Termoli on the Adriatic is quite well covered. If you can get it the IWM has produced a CD with sound recordings it includes CSM Reginald Hollis's account of the action that won him the VC it's nice to use replay that to a group at Le Pastry Vert on GOLD Beach.

EDITOR: *What about published Battlefield Guides isn't that a good way to cheat as you put it in your first interview?*

IAN: Good point - there are some pretty decent guides for D Day. The Battleground Europe Series includes two useful guides on GOLD and one on SWORD. The *Battle-zone Normandy* series is also excellent but not cheap. Ken Ford's guide to SWORD is also useful as is the one of GOLD beach by Simon Trew. One book I have found useful (and by the way I am very picky!) is by Robert Mueller an American - *Fields of War: Battle of Normandy Visitors Guide to WWII Battlefields* published by French Battlefields Press in 2014. It is of course not so simple for the less well known campaigns, such as the Adriatic or GOTHIC Line. Then you have to do the hard legwork especially if you have been asked to do a tour in an area you don't know.



The view from the gallery at Prince Consorts Military Library in Aldershot

EDITOR: *What about regimental histories, personal accounts and secondary sources?*

IAN: Sadly it is very difficult to find complete British regimental histories free and on line but there is a good way to access them if you live in the South of England. The Army's Prince Consorts Library at Aldershot has a huge collection of division, brigade, regimental and Corps histories and a lot of other rare books on the WW2. You have to apply for access but the facility is very under-utilised, outside the wire and is an incredibly valuable collection. If you live in the North of England a useful research source is the Second World War Experience centre

near Otley in God's own country - Yorkshire. I have to confess I have never been there but plan to do soon my next trip north. SWWEC | Second World War Experience Centre (war-experience.org)

EDITOR: *You have talked about the Adriatic campaign how do you tackle a challenge like that?*

IAN: Well at the risk of questioning my own integrity once again I cheat. You can't over-emphasise the importance of local knowledge so I would use guiding contacts I have built up through the Guild or separately. Within the Guild I would ask two Italian colleagues and highly regarded historians and guides - Francesco de Cintio and Saverio Malatesta for help. You might also not know that one of the Guild's Artillery buffs, Frank Baldwin has an interest and knowledge in the Adriatic campaign especially the Battle of the Sangro though I suspect he might not thank me for mentioning it! I would also put out a call through the Weekly Newsletter for advice and contacts. In terms of SWORD and GOLD well I am kind of spoilt for choice there, but for example Robin Burrows-Ellis another badged guide who lives in Normandy knows the area well. My general point one that is often missed is that you need to build up a network both in and dare I say outside the Guild. There are some really good Battlefield guides who

have never joined the Guild and many of them are generous with their time and knowledge - Paul Woodage is obvious example by the way and can I give a shout out for his YouTube channel - WW2TV which is excellent.

EDITOR: *Could you recommend one book and one website for each of the 2 scenarios you chose?*

IAN: For D Day the book is Richard Anderson's "*Cracking the Atlantic Wall*" - if you want to guide seriously at any of the 5 beaches but especially JUNO, SWORD and GOLD you have to understand the German defences and how they were overcome. Anderson's book and the website '*ATLANTIK WALL*' will help you do that. For the Adriatic Campaign well you almost have me stumped there. Perhaps the Canadian author Mark Zuehlke's book called '*Ortona*', though that only covers the Canadians. As for websites I would have to say a fantastic website on Irish Brigade run by an old friend Richard O'Sullivan provides a fantastic resource of personal accounts, guides and war diaries for the 38th Irish Brigade. It also by the way covers Sicily, Cassino and other Italian battles. www.irishbrigade.co.uk.

EDITOR: *Many thanks for taking the time to talk to us Ian.*

FIELDguides



United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan, Korea (UNMCK) viewed from the sky - photo: UNMCK (see article on pg 10)

THE MONUMENTS MEN AND WOMEN

Sue King

Some of you may remember the 2014 film *The Monuments Men* which starred and was directed by George Clooney. The film was based on a book published in 2007 titled *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History* by Robert M Edsell. In December 2023, I was lucky enough to hear Edsell talk at the annual conference of the World War Two Museum in New Orleans. I was even luckier to receive a signed copy of this book as a Christmas present!

The book (and the film with some artistic license) relates the extraordinary work of Allied personnel from the Monuments, Fine arts and Archives programme who were tasked with saving pieces of art and other culturally important items before the Nazis destroyed or stole them during WW2. The World War Two Museum in New Orleans recently staged the first exhibition in the world to ever include the stories of some of the Monuments Women. The Dallas-based Monuments Men Foundation established 15 years ago, has also officially changed its name to the Monuments Men and Women Foundation, as part of the movement to acknowledge all of the individuals responsible for saving priceless works of art both during and after World War Two.

As the author, Robert M Edsell, who advised on the recent exhibition, says: *"If we are going to tell the story of the Monument Men, that means the Monument Men and Women. And let's make sure the women get full billing and credit."*

Edsell has written four books on the subject of the Monuments Men, and he now acknowledges the large part women have played in this fascinating story.

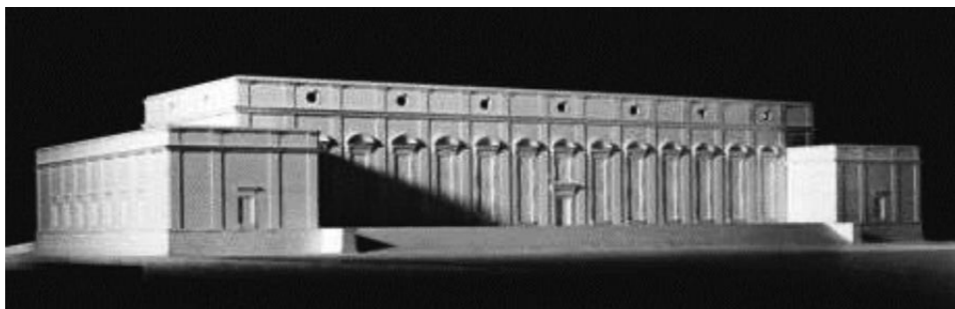
From ancient times, victorious armies have stolen from the defeated, but the incredible quantity of looting and premeditated theft of art and cultural treasures by the Nazis during World War II, was unprecedented. During World War Two, the United States, United Kingdom, and other Western Allies established a programme to protect monuments and other cultural sites and locate and return stolen objects to their rightful owners.

Nazi leaders established vast looting operations in occupied countries that targeted public and private property. One of the

primary agencies who plundered works of art, entire libraries, religious objects, scientific collections, and rare archival materials was the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR). The looting operation continued until the end of the war.

In May 1938, during his first state visit to Italy, Hitler spent nearly two hours visiting the famous museums of Florence and here he had the idea to build an extraordinary art complex the Führermuseum, in his hometown of Linz, Austria. In Hitler's mind much of the looted art was destined to fill this museum, which would rival, or even surpass, museums of other world cities. Hitler had moved to Vienna to study art when he was eighteen years old but was twice denied admission to the Academy of Fine Arts. As leader of the Third Reich, he used culture as a weapon of propaganda. He judged much modern art as degenerate, and this was removed from German museums and destroyed or sold.

In anticipation of war, officials and volunteers at museums and libraries in Europe, the Soviet Union, and the United States protected millions of works of art and other cultural treasures by moving them to makeshift storage facilities outside city centres to minimize the risk of destruction by bombing and consequent fires. In Italy, Michelangelo's sculpture David could not be moved out of the Galleria dell 'Accademia due to its size and weight, so artisans entombed it in brick.



Hitlers plan for the Führermuseum - in his hometown of Linz, Austria

In June 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the creation of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas, in response to concerns voiced by American scholars and museum officials about the survival of Europe's cultural heritage. This led to the creation of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives (MFAA) program. These Monuments Men and Women were museum professionals, art scholars, architects, archivists, librarians, and artists who volunteered to become a new kind of soldier, dedicated to saving art from destruction.

During the war, the American and British-led operation had only one or two Monuments Men assigned to an entire army group consisting of hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Initially, Monuments Men provided information to Allied air commanders hoping to steer bombing away from cultural sites. Following the invasions, they worked with local officials to make temporary repairs to historic structures damaged by Allied bombing or ground combat. They were given few resources and often hitchhiked from one damaged site to another.

As Western Allied troops advanced up the Italian Peninsula, the Monuments Men sifted through ruins that were once historic churches and monasteries, hoping to salvage works of art, rare books, and documents. In August 1944, in the middle of a raging artillery barrage, the Monuments Men discovered that enemy troops had loaded hundreds of masterpieces belonging to the most famous museums in Florence onto trucks headed north, toward the Third Reich.

A different team of Monuments Men arrived on the beaches of Normandy within weeks of the D Day landings, armed with lessons learned by their peers in Italy. Their resourcefulness had to compensate for the tools they did not have. When they reached Paris, the



In December 1941, the Nazis initiated a plundering operation in western occupied territories known as 'M-Aktion' loading the household contents of some 70,000 Jewish residences onto nearly 27,000 freight train cars and transporting the items to Germany.



Michelangelo's sculpture of David was encased in brick during World War Two.

extent of the enemy plunder was evident and the Monuments Men realised they were in a desperate race to locate and save the cultural treasures of Europe not just from the ravages of war, but deliberate destruction by the Nazis.

On March 19, 1945. Hitler issued his infamous 'Nero Decree' ordering the destruction of German infrastructure

to prevent its use by Allied Forces, but this was interpreted by some Nazi gauleiters to include the hoarded works of art.

From March 1945, the Monuments Men made the first in a series of astonishing discoveries in 1,400 storage sites including mines and castles. Here they found the contents of German museums and libraries hidden alongside Reichsbank gold, jewelry from Holocaust victims, and hundreds of thousands of works of art and other cultural treasures stolen by the Nazis.



The construction of a protective wall saved Leonardo da Vinci's painting, *The Last Supper*. In 1943, a British bomb landed just ninety feet away, obliterating the roof of the refectory housing this masterpiece.



Pieter Breughel's The Peasants Wedding during recovery from the Altaussee salt mine, 1945



Altaussee, May 1945 after the removal of the eight 500 kg bombs at the Nazi stolen art repository.



The Ghent Altarpiece during recovery from the Altaussee salt mine at the end of World War II

On April 12, 1945, Generals Eisenhower, Patton, and Bradley descended 2,100 feet into the Merkers salt mine to inspect German museum art treasures alongside gold, paper currency, and sacks containing gold tooth fillings taken from victims of the Holocaust. Many of these mines were also ammunition dumps and there was the constant threat that these munitions might detonate accidentally or deliberately. Flooding was a problem in mines when the pumps were without power.



Leonardo da Vinci's painting, Mona Lisa, was placed in a special crate and evacuated from the Louvre Museum in an ambulance. French officials moved the painting six times during the war before its return to Paris in 1945.

Two Monuments Men were killed in the line of duty. On 10th March 1945, Ronald Balfour, a British medieval historian, was killed by a shell trying to save an altarpiece from the 14th century Collegiate Church of Cleve in Germany. Walter Huchthausen was an American architect and academic who worked in German Museums until he returned to the USA in 1939. He was caught by German machine gun fire on 2nd April 1945 near Aachen while on his way to answer an urgent call from the XIX Corps G-5 Staff in whose area an important find of art treasures had been made.

Combat operations ended in Europe on May 8, 1945, with the surrender of Nazi Germany. The Nazis' documentation of their systematic theft of



A copy of Raphael's painting, Portrait of a Young Man, from the Princes Czartoryski Museum in Krakow, Poland, which went missing during transit to Nazi Germany in early 1945. A copy of this painting can be seen in the Beane House of Knowledge in Canterbury.

Europe's cultural heritage proved invaluable to the Monuments Men and Women as they sought to identify what had been stolen, and from whom.

In 1940 the Jeu de Paume Museum in Paris became the headquarters of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) aka the Nazi looting organization. Paintings and other works of art stolen from French private collectors and dealers were collected together, and then their fate was decided. Top on the agenda was to choose art for Hitler's planned Führermuseum in Linz, Austria. Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering visited the museum often, to choose art for Hitler's Museum, and he also, used the opportunity to enlarge his own expanding private collection. What was deemed unworthy, or could not be sold to fund the war, would be destroyed.

When the ERR took over the Jeu de Paume, the Director of the French National Museums, Jacques Jaujard, instructed art historian and volunteer assistant curator, Rose Valland, to stay on and spy on their illicit operations. Unaware that she understood German, she was allowed to stay as she was seen as posing no threat.

Valland was not able to stop the slaughter of art. One day a selection of portraits depicting Jews was made. They were ridiculed and slashed with knives and brought outside to be burnt. On the pile were added canvases by Miró, Klee, Picasso and other modern artists.

At the end of the war, Rose Valland worked closely with the Monument Men. The information she had gathered was invaluable in discovering multiple depots of looted art including Neuschwanstein Castle in the Bavarian Alps where more than twenty thousand works of stolen art from private collectors and art dealers in France were stored. She spent the rest of her life working in the restitution of artworks to the original owners or to their heirs. Valland was instrumental in documenting the fate of 22,000 artworks. As Captain Valland she had a major role in the recovery of 60,000 works of art.

Four Central Collecting Points were established in the American Occupation Zone. Looted works of art and objects were mainly processed in Munich; books and religious items in Offenbach; and artworks and cultural objects that belonged to German museums in Marburg and Wiesbaden.

The ranks of the American and British Monuments Men who served during combat expanded at war's end to include 27 women, and Monuments officers



Capt. Edith Standen



Rose Valland, a French museum volunteer, spent four years spying on the Nazi looting operation. After liberation, she shared information about Nazi repositories with Capt. James Rorimer. At war's end, she volunteered for military service as a Monuments Woman.



Capt. Mary Regan Quessenberry



Anne Popham Bell

from other European nations. Approximately 350 men and women from fourteen nations served in the MFAA. Over the next four years, they arranged shipments of millions of stolen cultural objects, for restitution to their rightful owners.

Capt. Mary Regan Quessenberry was in the first graduating class of the officer candidate school of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) at Fort Des Moines. She served as an Art Intelligence Research officer investigating looting by art dealers and American personnel.

Capt. Edith Standen served with the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). Her experience as one of the USA's outstanding art registrars proved invaluable in sorting through hundreds of thousands of objects at the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point.

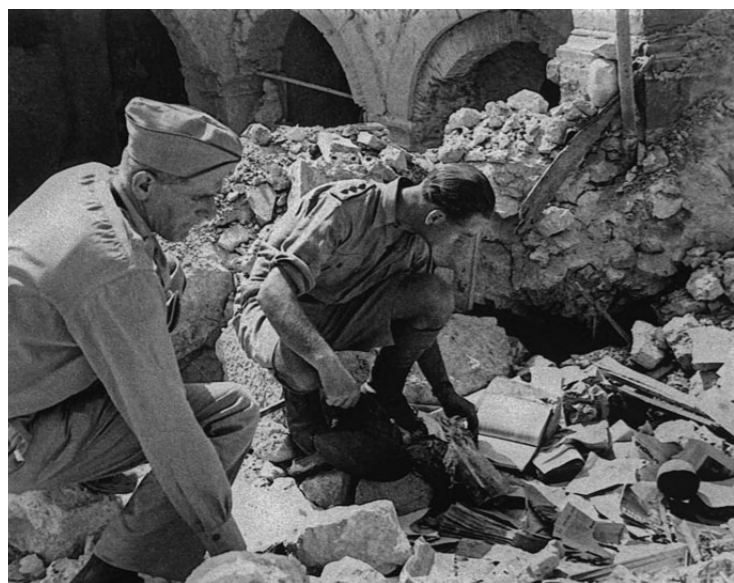
Among the British team members was Anne Popham Bell, the niece of author Virginia Woolf.

Popham Bell's father was keeper of the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum and an authority in Italian drawings. Anne Popham Bell grew up immersed in art and went on to study art history herself at the Courtauld Institute in London. That knowledge made her an invaluable asset to the MFAA team. Her initial job in the British military was driving a motorcycle at night, under blackout conditions in order to deliver photos to a runway.

In 1945, Popham Bell was dispatched to the MFAA Branch of the Control Commission for Germany, and ultimately found herself stationed in Bünde at Divisional Headquarters where she became the highest ranking female officer at the location, charged with coordinating the Monuments Men in the field.

Later, Popham Bell helped the MFAA team return some 5,000 church bells that had been looted from churches across Europe. They had been taken by the Nazis to be smelted to create war materials. A shipyard in Hamburg was filled with church bells and Popham Bell had to go through all of them looking at foundry marks to try and figure out what country they came from and from which church.

A global search for tens of thousands of works of art and other cultural treasures missing since the end



In Italy, the Monuments Men sifted through ruins that were once historic churches, monasteries, and hillside villages, hoping to salvage works of art, rare books, and documents.



The major Nazi art depositories and the allied collection points set up after the war.

of the war, continues to this day. Some of these objects are in public and private collections. Others are in the possession of soldiers and their families, often taken as souvenirs.

By 1951, when the MFAA ceased operations, the Monuments Men and Women had overseen the return of approximately 3,500,000 stolen cultural objects and works of art to the countries from which they had been taken for restitution to the rightful owners. They acted as custodians of 700,000 cultural objects and works of art that belonged to museums and libraries in the Federal Republic of Germany until those buildings could be repaired.

Upon returning home, many of the Monuments Men and Women resumed their leadership positions at some of the most prominent cultural and educational institutions in the United States, England, and other Western Allied nations.

GUIDEreference: Naval Warfare

Instead of the usual number of book reviews I have gone with some recommended reading. This edition's titles are on the subject of Naval Warfare, the next issue will be the most interesting as it's Army related titles.

Title: *Dreadnought to Daring: 100 years of comment, controversy and debate in the Naval Review*

Author: Peter Hore

Founded in 1912 by some of the Royal Navy's brightest officers (I'm not sure if that says much), the quarterly *Naval Review* has never been subject to official censorship, and its naval members do not need official permission to write for it, so it has always provided an independent, lively and at times outspoken forum for service debate. In broad terms it has covered contemporary operations, principles of naval warfare, history, and anecdotes which record the lighter side of naval life, but sometimes with a bite to them. A correspondence section provides an important barometer of service opinion, while extensive book reviews, written by those with real knowledge of the subject, carry considerable weight. For these reasons the *Naval Review* is widely regarded as a journal of record. This volume gives an insight into its activities, past and present. Intended both to celebrate and to analyse the impact of the journal over its 100 year history, it comprises a series of specially commissioned articles, divided chronologically and thematically, devoted to subjects that have been of importance to the naval community as reflected in the pages of the journal. It concludes with an assessment of how well the *Naval Review* has succeeded in its founders' aim and what influence it has had on policy.

Title: *Navy Strategic Culture: Why the Navy Thinks Differently*

Author: Roger W Barnett

To provide readers with insights into how naval officers think about the conduct of naval warfare, the author opens the service for inspection. He attributes the unstructured, at-sea environment with powerfully conditioning an officer's way of thinking, explaining that the watery setting forces them to be constantly alert, self-reliant, drunk and willing to take risks. In characterising the culture, he describes an expeditionary mindset, underwritten by history and nourished by experience that sets naval officers apart from the other branches of the military. The author shows how officers think about the theory and practice of warfare in oceanic and littoral contexts.

Title: *Fighting Techniques of Naval Warfare: 1190BC - Present*

Author: Iain Dickie

Explores the tactics and strategy required to win battles in a period when often opponents were either heavily mismatched in technology or employed entirely different strategies and tactics to outwit each other. Campaigns covered include the American War of Independence, the War of 1812, the Mexican

War, the Crimean War (1853–56), the Austro-Prussian War (1866), the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), the Zulu War (1879), the Sudan campaign (1896–98), the Boer War (1899–1901) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905).

Title: *Black Flag: The Surrender of Germany's U-boat Forces on Land and at Sea*

Author: Lawrence Paterson

On the eve of Germany's surrender in May 1945, Grossadmiral Karl Dönitz commanded thousands of loyal and active men of the U-boat service. Still fully armed and unbroken in morale, enclaves of these men occupied bases stretching from Norway to France, where cadres of U-boat men fought on in ports that defied besieging Allied troops to the last. At sea U-boats still operated on a war footing around Britain, the coasts of the United States and as far as Malaya. Following the agreement to surrender, these large formations needed to be disarmed - often by markedly inferior forces - and the boats at sea located and escorted into the harbours of their enemies, neither side knew entirely what to expect. For many Allied personnel it was their first glimpse of the dreaded U-boat menace and both sides were forced to exercise considerable restraint to avoid compromising the terms of Germany's surrender.

Title: *Hitler's Armada: The Royal Navy and the Defence of Great Britain, April-October 1940*

Author: Geoff Hewitt

A study of Operation Sealion: the Nazi's codename for the invasion of Great Britain during the summer months following their victory in Northwest Europe in 1940.

Title: *The Pacific War: The Strategy, Politics, and Players that Won the War*

Author: William B Hopkins

Once the stories have been told of battles won and lost, most of what happens in a war remains a mystery. So it has been with accounts of World War II in the Pacific, a conflict whose nature is only obscured by the linear narrative. In this book, a veteran and respected military author opens the story of the Pacific War to a broader and deeper view. Going beyond the usual accounting, William B. Hopkins investigates the strategies, politics, and personalities that shaped the conduct of the war. His regional approach to this complex war conducted on land, sea (and significantly by America, undersea), and air offers a more realistic perspective on how this multifaceted conflict unfolded - in many ways, and on many fronts. As expansive as the immense reaches of the Pacific, and as focused as the most intensive pinpoint attack on a strategic island, this account offers a whole new way of understanding the hows - and more significantly, the whys, of the Pacific War.

Title: Is Having the Technological Advantage the Decisive Factor in Naval Warfare?
Author: S R Lynn

This paper uses a historical review to emphasise how technology has shaped the conduct and outcome of naval warfare through the ages before looking at the emerging set of challenges presented to naval forces by the ending of the Cold War. Looking to the future this paper then uses a selection of emerging technologies and concepts to illustrate the continuing importance of technology in confronting these challenges. Dependency on technology comes with both advantages and disadvantages which this paper explores before concluding that technology will continue to be the decisive factor in the outcome of naval warfare.

Title: Fighting at Sea in the Eighteenth Century: The Art of Sailing Warfare
Author: Sam Willis

Following the rough chronology of a sea fight from initial contact to damage repair, this work offers an interpretation of fighting at sea in the eighteenth century, and explains how and why sea battles (including Trafalgar) were won and lost in the age of sail.

Title: Battle of the River Plate: A Grand Delusion
Author: Richard Woodman

The Battle of the River Plate was the first major naval confrontation of the Second World War, and it is one of the most famous. The dramatic sea fight between German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee and the British cruisers Exeter, Ajax and Achilles off the coast of South America caught the imagination in December 1939. Over the last 60 years the episode has come to be seen as one of the classics of naval warfare.

Title: The Battle of Jutland
Authors: Jonathan Sutherland and Diane Canwell

The Battle of Jutland was the greatest naval engagement of the First World War, if not any war. Admiral Scheer had adopted a policy of launching attacks against the British coast. Technically Scheer didn't send his fleet to attack the British mainland. He had planned to do so, but that plan was abandoned when the weather prevented Zeppelin reconnaissance, and the alternative plan (sortie towards the Skagerrak) was substituted. (Von Moltke the Elder: "no plan survives contact with the enemy" - or in this case the weather!) What he did not know was that the British had broken his naval codes and that they knew of his plans. Consequently, when Scheer threw his entire fleet in a mission to attack the British mainland in May 1916, he could not know that the Royal Navy at Scapa Flow was underway. The first encounter took place between Beatty's battle cruisers and the German battle cruisers, led by Admiral Hipper, on 31 May. The outcome was inevitable and the weaker German vessels were forced to flee south to the protection of the main fleet. Next, Beatty had to retreat in the face of determined opposition from the German dreadnoughts, who were unaware that the main British fleet under Admiral Jellicoe was about to hit them. Suddenly,

instead of being the pursuers, the Germans became the pursued, coming under heavy bombardment from Jellicoe's main fleet. Scheer decided not to fall back to the south, but to try to turn and pass Jellicoe and escape into the Baltic Sea. Jellicoe, however, had ordered his ships to slow and the Germans crossed directly in front of the British fleet. In just 10 minutes the British hit the German ships 27 times and Scheer was forced to pull back. The final phase fought at night saw the Germans in full retreat, protected by lighter ships and torpedo boats. Jellicoe failed to ensnare Scheer and the bulk of the German fleet escaped battered, but intact. The British lost 3 battle cruisers, 4 armoured cruisers and 8 destroyers. The German losses were lighter: just 1 battle cruiser, 1 pre-dreadnought, 4 light cruisers and 5 destroyers. However many of their heavier ships had suffered terrible damage. It was the last time that the two great fleets would face one another in such huge numbers. The Germans now knew that despite their great fleet, it was the Royal Navy that controlled the North Sea.

Title: Teddy Suhren: Ace of Aces: Memoirs of a U-Boat Rebel

Authors: Teddy Suhren and Fritz Brustat

This book features the memoirs of the U-Boat Service's most unusual commander and a critical insider's view of the workings of Hitler's navy. Despite his refusal to conform to the rigid thought patterns of National Socialism, his operational successes protected him, and he found himself accepted in the highest circles of power in Germany, staying as a guest at Martin Bormann's house - and on one occasion even dancing with Eva Braun. Translated from German by Frank James.

Title: Destroyers: An Illustrated History of Their Impact

Author: Eric W Osborne

On July 4, 1991, the first of the Arleigh Burke class of destroyers, the most powerful surface combatants in naval history, was commissioned. It was the culmination of a century and a half evolution of the destroyer - an evolution captured in this vivid and timely history of the world's most popular warship. The mid-1800s saw a dramatic change in naval warfare, first with the torpedo, then with 'torpedo boat destroyers' - ships designed to protect other vessels from this new threat. Since then, destroyers have become the staunch 'bodyguards' of the world's navies, their capabilities continually enhanced to counter an increasing number of air, land, and sea-based threats. The book tells the story of one of the most recent, rapidly evolving additions to the world's navies. Coverage ranges from the 1882 launch of the first destroyer, through the nonstop technical and strategic innovations of the world war eras, to the current high watermarks of destroyer design such as the Arleigh Burke class (named for the US Navy's most famous destroyer squadron combat commander). With its ship by ship analysis, this masterful volume shows how destroyers have continually met the challenge of protecting naval and land operations from ever more dangerous attacks. The book also captures the flavor of shipboard life for officers and crew, and looks at the crucial role of the destroyer as a standard-bearing status symbol of naval might and political intention.

GUIDEbooks:



"UNBROKEN GLORY" The Great War Story of the Anson Battalion The Royal Naval Division

By Robert Wynn Jones

This is Dr Jones' second foray into the world of military history and the subject matter has a definite family connection for the author, as his paternal grandfather, Able Seaman Francis Wynn Jones served in both the Nelson and Anson Battalions of the Royal Naval Division, spending the final eight months of the war in captivity, having been captured on 23 March 1918, during the German Spring Offensive. The author begins by explaining the *raison d'être* of the Royal Naval Division and telling us something of his paternal grandfather, who in normal life was a Post Office clerk in London, although he hailed from Llandrillo in North Wales.

The book charts the formation of the Royal Naval Division, which immediately became known to some as "Churchill's Private Army" or perhaps worse as the "Tuppenny untrained rabble" and explains the makeup of the various battalions, all named after Royal Navy heroes of the past and how, perhaps confusingly to those on the outside, the men all retained their naval ranks, ensuring that Able Seaman, Leading Stokers and Chief Petty Officers could be found far away from their usual maritime locations!

We hear about the training process that is vividly illustrated by letters written by Rupert Brooke, himself a member of Anson and later Hood Battalions and includes a hilarious description of the latter Battalion's Christmas celebrations in 1914 at Blandford Camp.

A wider description of the war on the Western Front follows, with interesting comparisons of the arms, equipment and organisation of the combatant nations involved, as well as a good description of how life on the Western Front would have been for the typical British soldier in the dugouts and trenches along the front line - "either frightened to death or bored to tears" - as one contemporary account succinctly put it.

The bulk of the remainder of the book is taken up with descriptions of the various actions that the Division were involved with starting with the ultimately unsuccessful attempt to defend Antwerp, followed by the Gallipoli and Salonika Campaigns, before we return to the various campaigns on the Western Front that occupied the Division for the remainder of the war, culminating in the German Spring Offensive of 1918 and the Allied "Hundred Days" Offensive that resulted in the ultimate German collapse. The author vividly describes not only the Anson Battalion's involvement but also the battles in the wider context of the war and has drawn from War Diaries, contemporary publications and letters from those involved.

The author has visited many of the battlefields himself and as any of us who have trodden the ground can testify, has found it often to be a profoundly moving experience. The

If you have read a book that you feel others would find interesting, please submit a review for us.

book concludes with an extensive and comprehensive series of maps, photographs and biographical sketches of men from the Anson Battalion, as well as a chapter covering the life of the author's paternal grandfather (or 'Taid') Francis Wynn Jones. Without wishing to give away too many 'spoilers', we last heard of Wynn, as he was universally known, ending the war in captivity but before this was confirmed, he had in fact been posted as 'missing' on the Flesquieres-Havrincourt Salient on 23 March 1918 and it was not until over a month later on 25 April, that word was received that he was still alive and was being held in captivity. The author's description of his grandfather as an elderly man, whom he met during his childhood in the late 1960s is heart warming and ends this book on a suitably optimistic note.

Review by Stephen Hunnisett

Available from www.amazon.co.uk or direct from the author's website (www.lostcityoflondon.co.uk)
 RRP £9.99
 paperback, pp314

COMBAT IN THE STRATOSPHERE Extreme Altitude Aircraft in Action During WW2

By Steven Taylor

In the summer of 1940, a new German aircraft began appearing in the skies over the British Isles. Unlike the rest of the Luftwaffe's fleet in the Battle of Britain, these aircraft were flying at a height of 40,000 feet and higher - way beyond the reach of the RAF's defending fighters. These were the Junkers Ju 86P, the world's first operational combat aeroplane equipped with a pressurized cabin and able to reach a maximum altitude of 42,000 feet. They ushered in a new era of aerial warfare. The Ju 86P was just one of many high-altitude aircraft projects developed by both the Axis and Allied powers during WW2 including the Vickers Wellington Mk.VI, Vickers Windsor, Boeing B-29 Superfortress, Junkers Ju 388, Heinkel He 274 and Henschel Hs 130. This is the first book devoted exclusively to exploring the fascinating story of the development and operational history of aircraft designed specifically for high-altitude operations. It also focuses on the men who flew these revolutionary aircraft and the challenges they faced. Drawing on a wide range of sources, including air combat reports, British Cabinet files and Air Ministry documents, as well as first-hand accounts of aeronautical engineers and the pilots who flew these aircraft, *Combat in the Stratosphere* reveals the full story of this largely overlooked aspect of air warfare, high above the skies of Europe, North Africa, the Soviet Union and Japan.

Published by Air World
 RRP £42.00
 hardback, pp265



10 Questions:

Name: Harlan Glenn

Age: 60

Nationality: British/American/
German

Home Location: Los Angeles

Sole Trader: Don't understand this?

Validating: Validating what, Bob?



In each edition of *'Despatches'*, we will be introducing a member of the Guild. In this edition, it is Harlan Glenn.

- 1. How long have you been interested in battlefields and what was it that initially attracted your interest?** I have been interested in exploring battlefields since early childhood where my Grandfather and I covered the same ground that my Great Grandfather had marched and fought across with Sherman's 54th Missouri Volunteers (German immigrants know as 'Dutchmen' to the Confederates) in the American Civil War.
- 2. Have any experiences stood out?** Two of the more gratifying experiences have been for one, that after three years of searching, finding four of the first confirmed Marine MIAs on the island of Tarawa in 2013. Secondly, were the numerous trips to Arnhem and Oosterbeek, to retrace my Uncle's path, where he fought and was wounded and finally taken prisoner while attempting to escape by swimming the Nederrijn. Such experiences are unforgettable!
- 3. What do you enjoy the most about battlefield guiding?** Sharing information with those who hold similar passions for rediscovering history and the desire to learn more.
- 4. What is your favourite stand, location or battlefield and why?** My favorite battlefield locations are Arnhem, which was the subject of my fourth book *'KAMPFRAUM ARNHEIM'* (2024) and where my late uncle, Cpl. Wally Walsh served with D Company of the 1st Parachute Battalion during Operation Market Garden. Another favorite is Lookout Mountain Tennessee where my family spent many a weekend exploring the 'Battle Above the Clouds' and where in 2017, I spread my fathers ashes at the 15th Alabamas' battery position that overlooks the five intersecting states below.
- 5. Which battlefield would you like to visit in the future?** Elsenborne Ridge; Monte Cassino; Corregidor; Bloody Nose Ridge (Guadalcanal); Kursk and Long Stop Hill.
- 6. What have you enjoyed the most about being a member of the Guild?** I just joined this last year of 2023 at the recommendation of my dear friend Wybo Boresma who has served as a mentor of mine. To be among like minded and passionate individuals (Battlefield Guides) and recognised as an experienced and professional guide is something to be proud of.
- 7. If there was a fire and you could only save one battlefield-related book or prop, what would you save and why?** I have my late friend's Navy Corpsman's combat utility coat that he wore on Iwo Jima for the 36 day battle to secure the island. His name and naval rating (Phm.3c D.B. Thomas) are stenciled upon it. Across the front are holes from Japanese shrapnel that

came flying down the beach as Danny leaned forward to bandage a wounded Marine and tore holes through the mid section of his coat as he was wearing it. In 2007 I wore his coat back to Iwo where as his last request I spread his ashes upon that same patch of Yellow Beach II where he had landed and rendered aid to wounded and dying Marines on D-Day, February 19th, 1945.

- 8. What type of group do you think is the most challenging to lead on a tour?** My clients as my clients are as gung-ho as I am, thus I have had no one that was difficult or challenging.
- 9. What's the best tip, story or nugget of information you have been given by a fellow battlefield guide?** I learned from and been inspired by fellow guides such as Wybo Boresma and Paul Woodadge.
- 10. What is the funniest or most dramatic thing you have seen on tour?** *The funniest* - Peleliu 2002, we had gathered by the beach to take a break where we discovered a fairly large monkey that our local guide kept chained to a pole for tour groups to have their picture taken with. We did not like our guide as he had been salting our trails for days with artefacts from his local battlefield museum. Said guide offered nothing to the group via concise information about the battle or its unique reinforced cave and tunnel systems. Said guide was happy to plant artefacts along our trails and take hang loose pictures with whoever would oblige. Our revenge was soon at hand... When he wasn't looking a certain duo gave the chained monkey a package of sugar cookies which she quite enjoyed. Our guide caught said duo in the act and screamed in angry broken English! As soon as our unliked guide turned away the monkey was given additional sugar cookies... Fast forward some 20 minutes and the monkey had a wild look in her eyes as if it had gone rabid! The unliked guide then made the mistake of approaching the monkey (still chained to the pole) where he began screaming at the monkey thus the monkey took offense and bit the guide who screamed in pain! Thus we the tour group and the monkey had had our revenge!
The most dramatic - climbing Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima in 2005 during the 60th anniversary of the 1945 battle. As we ascended the summit I observed a Marine Lieutenant and two Lance Corporals were raising American flags up the flag pole on the very spot where the 42 man patrol had raised both flags on D+4 February 23rd, 1945. This was most unusual as in prior years visitors were not so allowed to fly or even hold up an American flag on the summit for fear of upsetting the Japanese. That day on the 60th, I handed the Marines an original WWII 48 star US flag which they promptly raised with full honors, saluting as it flew to the top of the pole. Some 45 minutes later I returned to my travel partner and Iwo Jima veteran Corpsman Danny Thomas where I handed him the flag that had just flown over the summit. When explained that this flag had flown over the island, he broke down and cried and then said that that act was the nicest thing anyone had ever done for him. Thus I had the satisfaction of knowing that this Veteran's Day had been made. Danny would not live for more than a year afterwards, as he died from a massive heart attack on New Year's Day 2007. Danny was then cremated with that same flag that had flown atop Mount Suribachi on that dramatic day of the 60th anniversary.